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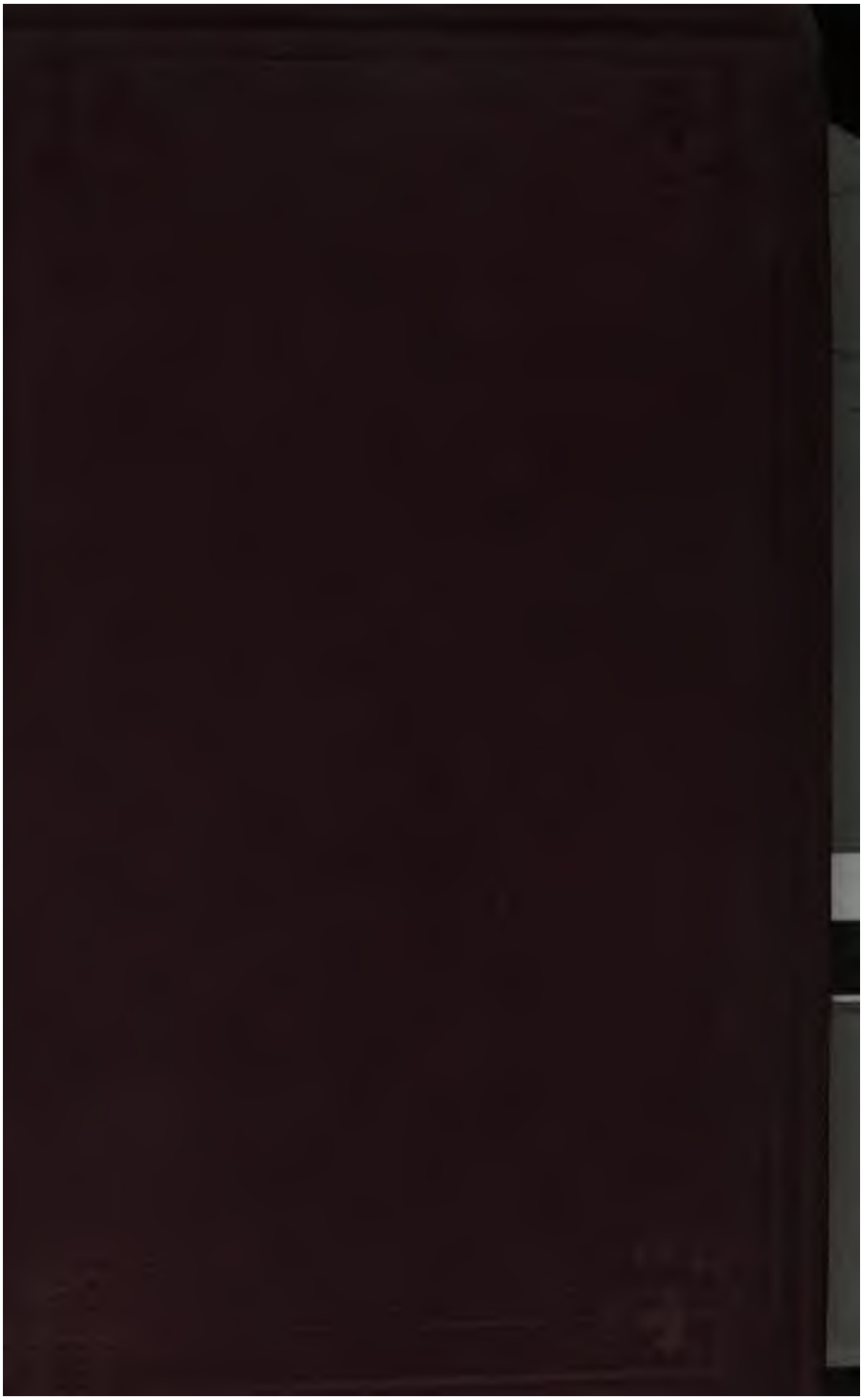

CHRISTIE'S FAITH.

VOL. II.

CHRISTIE'S FAITH.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"HIGH CHURCH," "NO CHURCH,"
"OWEN: A WAIF," "MATTIE: A STRAY,"
"CARRY'S CONFESSION,"
&c. &c.

"Look to the Poor."
COWPER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1867.
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250. o. 174.

LONDON
PRINTED BY MACDONALD AND TUGWELL, BLENHEIM HOUSE,
BLENHEIM STREET, OXFORD STREET.

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CHAPTER I.

MR. BRADDLETON'S SHOP IN PARK LANE.

MR. BRADDLETON kept a shop in Park Lane. A quiet kind of shop, with nothing in the windows, and with liveried servants hanging about the doors—a shop that trusted to its connection for support, and was only open in "the season."

Mr. Braddleton did not consider himself a shopkeeper; the very name of trader would have added an extra shade of colour to his already rubicund countenance; he owned a carriage and pair, was a man of considerable property, a man of many clubs, and of many friends, with a crest on his note-paper—crest not found and emblazoned on a ream of note-paper for thirty-five shillings by an enterprising stationer—a place in the Red Book, and a box at the opera. Society courted Braddleton, and relied on him; and if Braddleton relied—that is,

lived—on society, why, the mutual confidence is touching, and should be free from any envious shaft of ours. Still Mr. Braddleton kept a shop in Park Lane. The fact is positive, and as the shop must come into our story, we are bound to chronicle the little business transacted over the counter between Mr. Braddleton and one of our characters.

Mr. Braddleton gave first-rate dinner-parties, at which first-rate fellows—fellows with handles to their names, ah, and big handles too!—presented themselves, and made merry at Mr. B.'s expense. If Mr. B. made merry at their expense afterwards, that was a *lex talionis*, and no one was dissatisfied.

Mr. Braddleton was a *connoisseur*, then. Not to know Braddleton, and not to be aware of his extensive knowledge, his consummate taste, was to lose caste at once. Braddleton's verdict on china, bronzes, pictures, old or new tapestry, old or new furniture, was final. Dukes relied upon him; princes, setting up in housekeeping for themselves, sent for him in a hurry; parties with no taste, but plenty of money—bankers, Hebrew millionnaires, and dust contractors—threw themselves upon his clemency, and prayed him to do his best for them,

and make out his little bill for them whenever he considered it desirable.

Mr. Braddleton took all this trouble to oblige his friends; he never ran after a commission, offered anything for sale, or put himself forward in any way whatever. He was in London during the season; the rest of his time abroad, pouncing upon out-of-the-way articles of *vertu*, or upon out-of-the-way foreigners, who dealt in the manufacture of "antiques." All his acquisitions turned up in Park Lane in the season; and after dinner, if a bronze, a vase, a painting on copper, a candelabrum, or a piece of china, were admired, it was generally understood that it had its price, and could be sent home in the morning. Let it be added, that no one ever confessed to a bad bargain with Braddleton; it was money's worth for the money, a something that could not have been procured elsewhere. If there were a little "cooking" occasionally,

> "Modern repairs
> To ancient affairs,"

et cætera, it was only known to Braddleton, and the clever man who did the job for him. Mr. B. was the sublimate essence of Wardour Street; he spent

much money, and "turned" much money. He dressed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. He had no connection with the trade, and South Kensington and the British Museum acknowledged with thanks "his loans," and kept his name fresh and green upon their cards. He was a clever man, be it said, and, considering his trade, as honest as he could be. He fought hard for originals, but failing in the fight —as men however stanch will fail sometimes—he fell back upon a copy now and then that was inimitable.

The rage at Braddleton's in the season, eight years after the events related in our preceding chapters, was a cabinet. A modern piece of marqueterie work—marqueterie work on the mosaic principle, that had not its equal here or abroad, and was, therefore, subject-matter for much gossip. A work that had been the labour of many years, it was reported.

A noble work of art, even of genius, was this cabinet. It was the most genuine article of *vertu* in the Braddleton collection, representing honest labour, perseverance, faith in the worker's own powers and taste. There were no burnt woods

or engraved lines amongst the gods and goddesses, living, as it were, on the cabinet panels—it was quite a Maclise grouping in marqueterie; and though the fashionable world bid high for it, still the minimum price at which Mr. Braddleton was disposed to let it go had not hitherto been reached.

There were some "ravellings" of that world in the Braddleton drawing-room one afternoon in May. Ladies out for an airing, and gentlemen making for Rotten Row, had dropped in at Braddleton's, *en route* to hear the latest news, and see the latest "sensation" in still life, hence quite a *conversazione* in Park Lane on the day we gather up the threads of our narrative, and once more trace the fortunes of those connected with our story.

We enter the drawing-room at three in the afternoon with two of the latest arrivals—a mother and daughter, chaperoned by a perky little gentleman, with wiry hair and pink eyes—a gentleman whom we have heard called Tinchester, and who, at the commands of his mistress, had quitted business at an early hour to attend upon "the ladies." Somewhat against Mr. Tinchester's inclination this, despite that little passion for his mistress,

still quietly simmering somewhere under his frilled bosom. Ladies, in Mr. Tinchester's opinion, were for after business hours, along with the theatres and concerts, and it was an alarming sacrifice of time to be dancing attendance at that time of day, with the sun high in the heavens, and the waggons, and barges, and horses, all in motion further East.

Miss Lettice Henwood had grown tall and "lady-like"—very tall, it may be premised, and carrying her height with a grace not always apparent in "runners" and "climbers." Her father had been a tall man in his day, and she had taken after him rather than her mother, shooting up with a rapidity that had alarmed that mother for her health when Lettice was a year or two younger. Lettice's growing days were over now, however, and though she professed that she was strong and well, it was apparent that she had outgrown her strength somewhat, or else the heat of the day had rendered her more pale and languid than her wont. Whether Lettice had improved in personal appearance with the eight years that have intervened since our last notice of her, is a matter of doubt; the features that were somewhat sharp

in the child, still remained sharp in the woman—had "set in" sharply, giving her an aristocratic profile, but a full face, the reverse of anything that was plump, round, or fresh-coloured. A sickly girl of twenty, in fact, with melancholy grey eyes, a girl with a decisive look about her, it may be added—a look so decisive, that one or two gentlemen, with slight thoughts of settling in life, and thoughts less slight about a good settlement with the ladies whom they might settle with, winced at it, and fancied it was a better plan to take another turn or two on the common. An heiress was a very good thing in her way, but there were more heiresses than one to be picked up by good-looking fellows with something to say for themselves. Mrs. Henwood was only two or three years above forty—she held fast to forty, in fact—and might marry again, and play the deuce with family arrangements. No one was hovering round the circle of Miss Henwood's attractions, and there was time enough yet, if a good look were kept out from the watch-tower. Memorandum: to keep an eye upon Miss Henwood, only daughter of the relict of one of the richest old boys in the City!

Mrs. and Miss Henwood were both apparelled after one fashion and one colour—"might be took for sisters anywheres, mum," Simkins had said that morning to the elder lady, before the carriage steps were lowered by Jeames.

To be taken for sisters was the one grand aim of Mrs. Henwood's existence, hence the costume of mother and daughter. Pink silk bonnets, black lace shawls, clouded or painted muslins—or whatever you call those billowy dresses, that float on parades, and astonish the plebeian Browns—white silk parasols, with linings to match the bonnets, and gloves to match the linings, jewelled bracelets on wrists, and jewelled trinkets in the ears; all these and more bursting on the little world of dilettanteism that bright May afternoon.

Mrs. Henwood presented a less languid appearance than her daughter; in moments of excitement it was possible in her to forget the part of "fine lady" that she had acted for years. Mrs. Henwood was animated that day. She had but heard of the cabinet that morning, for the man Braddleton, as she called him, had not condescended to drop her a line concerning it—notwithstanding that he had had the furnishing of one room for

her in the antique style a few years since, and had had a few "pretty pickings" only last July. She came in somewhat animated, then; shook hands with one or two friends whom she recognized, and then whilst her daughter dropped upon a sofa near the door, and Mr. Tinchester paused to dab his forehead, put on full sail, and bore down upon the man of taste.

Mr. Braddleton was delighted to see Mrs. Henwood—charmed to see her looking so well—caught a glimpse of her yesterday at the Opera, and the day before at the flower-show—capital azaleas, weren't they?—such bodies of colour! Very pleased to see Mrs. Henwood again, to be sure—very much so, indeed—much more than much so, for he saw a high bidder in the eyes of the lady confronting him.

"You're a dreadful man, Mr. Braddleton," half angrily and half coquettishly, "never to write to me about that cabinet—never to let me know!"

"I was thinking of writing to you this very day, my dear madam."

"I hope that you are speaking the truth, Mr. B."

"'Pon my honour. But the fact is"—assuming

a grave cast of countenance—"the fact is, I thought that Lord Hufley would have closed with me. The first refusal was promised his lordship, I assure you."

"Lord Hufley thinks that he is entitled to the first refusal of everything, I suppose," said Mrs. Henwood tetchily. "Well, and why did he not have the cabinet?"

"He didn't like my price—that's all," said Mr. Braddleton. "It's a matter of no consequence to me. I shall take it to Paris with me in September."

"Where is it?"

Mr. Braddleton indicated the cabinet, standing in one corner of his room—set rather out of the way than otherwise—the cabinet round which a group was already assembled, discussing, praising, criticizing.

"I will look at it when there is a less crowd," said Mrs. Henwood. "Meanwhile, tell me about it—what price you put upon it—who wrote about it in the papers?"

She subsided into a corner of the couch by the window, and Mr. Braddleton subsided into a chair facing her. Here was a chance of business; here

was a chance that he had neglected in his eagerness for more patrician customers; he had not played his cards well in this matter, and yet perhaps his indifference to sell had lured the lady here in greater haste than any missive which he might have forwarded. We judge events by their results.

Mr. Braddleton began business at once. The cabinet was a subject to grow eloquent upon. It was unique; it represented a fourth of a man's life-time—the life-time of a man of genius. The reader may not be aware that there is a genius in inlaying as well as in painting, and that few and far between are the men who put life in veneers. Half a dozen men in England and France together may be called first-rate marqueterie workers —certainly not a greater number. And first-rate work—the work of these men—fetches its price; just as a painting by Landseer or Frith, only, unfortunately for the student of this art, the profit flows into the pockets of a go-between like Braddleton, who takes the order, gives out the design, perhaps, and keeps the name of the worker in the background. Still names will escape, and find their way to the light at times, just as the

seed sown in dark places fights its way to the light in due course.

The cabinet was dwelt upon in all its details by Mr. Braddleton, a man evidently proud of his *chef d'œuvre.* Mrs. Henwood listened not too patiently; she had made up her mind to be the purchaser—that was almost sufficient for her, although she would strike as good a bargain as she could under the circumstances, like a business woman, or a woman who had made her money by business. She did not care for the cabinet; it was scarcely to her own taste, that liked something brighter and gayer, with more colour and gold in it; but fashion had whispered of the cabinet; lords had been dismayed at its price, and it would render her more fashionable and popular if she became its purchaser. What its price was did not affect her much; she could afford to spend money, and had she not been able to afford it, she thought, with that doggedness of resolution that we first saw exemplified on board the Boulogne boat, she would have closed with the offer all the same. Money sat not very close to her heart—only that which money could buy.

The price was mooted at last. Mr. Braddleton

twined his long fingers together, and whispered,

"Four thousand pounds."

"It's a heavy price, Mr. B.—it's an enormous price."

"Not if you see the cabinet. Allow me——"

"Presently—I shall see it presently," said Mrs. Henwood; "the company is dwindling, and we shall have these rooms cleared in a little while. You must find these people a great anxiety, wandering about your house as though there were a sale on, and looking into all kinds of places where they have no business. Why, there's Lettice gone!" she ejaculated.

"Your daughter—really I have been very remiss in not welcoming her before," said Mr. Braddleton, springing to his feet, as though politeness were to be preferred to the profits of his legitimate business.

"She has gone wandering with the rest, I daresay," said Mrs. Henwood, rising also; "she's a little eccentric and curious. And Mr. Tinchester too—oh! there he is asleep, with the back of his head in a porcelain jar—what a droll position, to be sure!"

Mrs. Henwood gave vent to her girlish laugh at

this juncture; at this juncture also there came into the room a fair-haired dandy with elevated eyebrows.

"Ah! my lord," exclaimed Mr. Braddleton.

"I say, now—look here," said his lordship. "I'll make it three thousand five hundred for it, and upon my soul, I——"

"Mr. Braddleton," said Mrs. Henwood, extending her hand to the gentleman whom she addressed, "I will take it at your own price. Is it a bargain?"

"Madam—it is."

And Mr. Braddleton, delighted at the opportunity of discomfiting a lord—a lord who had nearly thrown the cabinet upon his hands, and was *not* a regular customer—took Mrs. Henwood's hand, and bowed over it like a gentleman of the old school. Lord Hufley looked wrathfully at Mr. Braddleton when the connoisseur regretted that the cabinet was no longer his property, stared at Mrs. Henwood not too courteously, walked away at last to inquire about that lady, and to take one more look at the cabinet with which he had trifled too long; finally strode out of the house, and swore for a quarter of an hour on horseback till

he met his uncle, the bishop, riding a cock-horse also in Rotten Row, and looking the picture of good-humour as usual.

With the exception of Mr. Tinchester, still bent backwards like a contortionist, Mrs. Henwood and Mr. Braddleton were alone together—standing before the cabinet that had been the nine days' wonder of the town.

"It's a large sum for so quiet an affair," she murmured; "but it's rather pretty, and will look well in a recess. Who is the maker?"

"Oh! it comes from one of the first houses."

"Stanley and Burns, I suppose?"

"Ahem—yes—exactly."

"And what man, or men, in their employ made this cabinet?"

"Really I can't say. I never ask the name of the workmen employed on these sorts of things."

"One hand, or more than one hand in that piece of marqueterie, Mr. Braddleton?"

Mr. Braddleton thought two. If he were asked upon his honour as a connoisseur, he should say that a certain portion of the work had been finished by another hand. A small portion—but certainly *a* portion.

"The man's name is Martin Wynn," said Mrs. Henwood.

Had Mr. Braddleton heard the name of Wynn? Well, yes—he might have heard that name at Stanley and Burns'. He would not assert positively that he had. The name of Messrs. Stanley and Burns' workmen were not his business.

"Send the maker—the real maker—to my house with the cabinet," said Mrs. Henwood.

Mr. Braddleton hesitated. Was this lady about to seek the fountain-head at once?—to give orders for cabinets of the makers themselves, perhaps?—to ascertain the money that had been given the marqueterie worker or workers, in the first instance? All this was very possible; but it was not probable that orders could be executed by working-men; there was want of capital in the way; there was the fear of Messrs. Stanley and Burns; and there was Messrs. Stanley and Burns' wholesome fear of *him!* Mrs. Henwood looked sharply into Mr. Braddleton's face.

"It is mere curiosity—I admire genius—I think the man deserves a few kind words for all this work."

"Certainly—I have no objection. I will write to Messrs. Stanley and Burns at once."

"Thank you. Let the man come with his cabinet. I am sure that it is one man, myself."

Mr. Braddleton said, "Indeed!" very languidly. Mrs. Henwood might be positive concerning an article of *vertu*, but that did not matter a great deal to the shopkeeper in Park Lane.

Miss Henwood came into the room at the same instant, and was met by her mother's sharp inquiry,

"Where have you been?"

"The room was hot—I have been sitting in the carriage."

"In the carriage! I don't see that the carriage is cooler than this room. But you are looking very warm, Lettice."

Lettice muttered an assent to this, and then turned hastily to Mr. Braddleton. A few civilities exchanged in this direction, Mr. Tinchester startled out of slumber by a sudden poke in the side with Mrs. Henwood's parasol, and then the representatives of commerce—of wholesale life—were ready to depart.

"Remember your faithful promise to me, Mr. B.," said Mrs. Henwood, shaking her glossy side curls at the man of taste before she departed from the room, "the workman with his work!"

CHAPTER II.

MARTIN BRINGS HOME THE CABINET.

THE cabinet was brought home to Wimbledon the next morning—brought home by the hands that had worked for many years at it.

Mrs. Henwood had left directions with the servants as to the place for the cabinet, and had given orders that the name of the individual accompanying the work should be delivered in at once to her. The servant fulfilled this commission, bringing in to a tastefully-furnished breakfast-parlour—the window opening upon a fair sweep of lawn and garden ground—the name of Mr. Martin Wynn.

"I thought so," she muttered to herself; and then added, in a louder tone, "Ask Mr. Wynn to step this way, as soon as convenient to him."

"Yes, ma'am."

The lacquey departed, and Mrs. Henwood, with more alacrity than her late languid *pose* might have warranted, rose and looked at herself in the glass,

adjusted hastily a cobweb-kind of lace handkerchief upon her head, set her collar more straight, fidgeted with a massive brooch at her throat, finally put her elbows on the mantelpiece to take another long look at herself before the gentleman was shown into her presence. It was a very thoughtful face, at which she gazed intently—upon which, after awhile, she tried the effects of a smile, a frown, an arch expression, relapsing at last into the thoughtful mood again, and overtaken in her reverie, and before she could change her position, by the re-entrance of the domestic, announcing—

"Mr. Wynn."

Mrs. Henwood's blushes came up through her pearl powder at this intrusion on her study, and she remained for an instant perplexed at the advent of the footman and her guest—the latter biting his nether lip hard to keep the smile down in the presence of the servant.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Wynn," she said, the moment afterwards. "This is an unexpected meeting, after seven years' separation."

"Eight years, madam," corrected Martin Wynn, "eight years and a few months since we met in Upper Ground Street."

"Where you told a falsehood, if you remember."

Martin Wynn coloured.

"I never told——"

"There—there's no occasion to deny it," said Mrs. Henwood, quickly, "it is of no consequence now,—you made a promise, and you broke your word, that's all. Men of your class," she added, a little scornfully, "are not very particular, I believe, about the promises they break."

"Oh! yes, we are—a few of us," added Martin; "and I *did* break my word about bringing Zach here—broke my word twice within that month, so I did. Guilty in my own eyes, and in yours, Mrs. Henwood."

"Spoken with your usual frankness," said Mrs. Henwood, seating herself on her couch, or dropping gracefully into one corner of it. She did not ask Martin to be seated; she would have impressed him by her state, by the effulgency beaming around her "at home," surrounded by the home-adornments; she would have had him overcome with awe at her position, standing in her presence as in a queen's, and becoming very grateful for the permission to be accorded, in due course, to seat himself in that room. But Martin Wynn, perceiving

the lady at her ease, took at once the chair most ready to his hand, and planted himself upon it. He was a man who loved equality.

"Eight years since, then, you preached to me about my duty in Upper Ground Street. What a dreadful memory you have, man!"

"That year is to be remembered by me for more reasons than one," said Martin in reply.

"What reasons?" asked Mrs. Henwood; "surely you do not call the year memorable because you met—you met anyone in particular?"

"Ah! but I do, though," was the quick response to this.

"May I ask you to explain? You are dreadfully mysterious, or romantic, Mr. Wynn."

"I hate mystery—and I am not a bit romantic," Wynn replied with a laugh; "but I can't explain, for all that. Some long day hence the story will interest you, perhaps, more than it does at present."

"I am really curious," asseverated Mrs. Henwood.

She spread out her hands and raised her shoulders slightly, drooping her head on one side at the same time. These were her company manners, and they

had been successful in their way and in their day; but Martin Wynn only laughed again, betraying no embarrassment. Mrs. Henwood was a little angered by his manner, but it would have pleased her in her heart to think that this tall, bright-faced, broad-chested man had considered one year very memorable because he saw her in it for the first time since their childhood. She was prepared to draw herself up with wounded dignity at the confession, however—to remind him, by her haughtiness of demeanour, that it was a liberty to think of her, or to call the year of meeting with her memorable; but she was disappointed none the less at his obduracy, and even a little doubtful if he were thinking of her at all in connection with that time.

"Well, I have not permitted you to see me in order to talk about memorable years," she said peevishly; "that is your own business, of course. And talking about business, reminds me of the cabinet that I purchased yesterday of Mr. Braddleton."

"Before we speak of that business, I should like to ask you a few questions, madam," said Martin, with more earnestness; "that is why I availed

myself very willingly of the opportunity to come here."

Mrs. Henwood bowed assent to his wish.

"I should like to know how your nephew Zachary is progressing in life? I should be very glad to hear that he has been a comfort to you, rewarding you for much kindness by much gratitude?"

"You have not troubled yourself to inquire for eight years," said Mrs. Henwood in reply; "you would have done so, I imagine, had you been interested in his welfare."

"Indirectly I have heard that he is clever and shrewd, and a good scholar—I had no right to come and ask you, Mrs. Henwood. I believe it was understood by my family that all connection between it and Zachary Fernwell was to cease for ever."

"You could not understand a great deal about it, considering that you were in Paris at the time," said the lady; "I might have said something to that effect to your sister—I scarcely remember. Possibly, for I took Zachary for good, and I object to mixed classes, and it was better that his training should not be disturbed; but for all

that, had you been as interested in that boy as you professed to be, you would have asked about him before this."

Martin Wynn looked grave under the reproof. After awhile, he hastened to offer his defence.

"I was afraid of disturbing by a word his *chance*, madam. I, and a few more, were very anxious concerning his progress, and to hear the good news of his better life from you would have been glad tidings to us all. But surely you wished that there should be no intrusion?"

"I wish it still, for that matter."

"Then I have not been wrong?"

"You ask me about my nephew Zachary," she said quickly; "well, I will satisfy your curiosity. He has proved himself clever enough—*sharp* enough. He enters my business next week as sub-manager—he is twenty-one—and I have no doubt that he will do justice to the firm. I believe that he does justice to my training—he is admirably adapted for commerce, and once launched upon the sea of commerce, with his head fairly above water, I leave him to make his fortune. He will make it," she added; "I have no doubt of that."

"But the—the virtues of the boy—or man, that he is now. Is he grateful, kind, affectionate——"

Mrs. Henwood's girlish laugh came out in full force at this juncture.

"Really I don't know—I don't care," she said, after the laugh had rung out for a few seconds and startled Martin Wynn; "I never *was* greatly interested in him, you remember, and therefore I have not striven to discover much gratitude, kindness, affection, and all that. I have spent a deal of money on him."

"But——"

"Oh! he has been abroad the last year or two —why, I have even found a travelling tutor for him. Every one tells me that I am an aunt in a hundred thousand, and I am inclined to think so myself."

"But you like this boy?"

"I see him very seldom. I daresay I should like him if I saw more of him, or had more time; he's a gentlemanly young man enough, but, of course, I have not let his troubles—if he has any —disturb me. I am nervous enough without that; and oh! the sick-headaches that I suffer from occasionally!"

She put her jewelled hand to her forehead as she spoke, as though the reminiscence brought back a sense of pain with it. Martin Wynn stared at her as at a strange specimen of animated nature. He scarcely regarded Mrs. Henwood in a clearer light than Mrs. Henwood regarded him.

The lady was the first to break the silence.

"You are a man mixing with all sorts of people, and interested in these Fernwells," she said—"have you heard anything of the father, or the brother, all this time?"

"The father was transported for seven years, under an assumed name, I believe."

"Very kind of him to keep the name of Fernwell to himself. That accounts for me being spared his importunity. Well, serve him right! And the brother?"

Martin Wynn hesitated for a few moments, then said—

"Oh! the brother?—he reformed."

"Reformed?" repeated Mrs. Henwood.

"Some fellow took him in hand, and taught him a trade, and pegged hard at him—at his mind, soul, and understanding—and turned him out a pretty decent specimen."

"For a Fernwell."

"Ah! for a Fernwell, perhaps."

"I am glad to hear it, of course," said Mrs. Henwood, repressing a yawn; "you may know the man who took all this trouble with a thief?"

"Well, I occasionally come face to face with him—when I shave," added Martin, in a lower tone.

"You might tell that man to tell his pupil, or whatever he may be, to keep away from here. One Fernwell has been quite enough to patronize; and even *he* will object very strongly to further acquaintance with his brother."

"I hope not."

"It has been one aim of mine to render Zachary a proud man," said Mrs. Henwood; "his tutors have had their instructions from me on *that* point, at least."

"For what reason?" asked Martin.

"Dear me!—what a terrible stare that is of yours, Mr. Wynn!—quite an evil eye, I declare!" she said, with her girlish laugh again predominant; "for what reason?—why, for the best of reasons, in order that he might not think of his past life, and of the darkness and wretchedness

belonging to it. In order that his pride might stand his friend, whenever his wretched father and brother should come across his path."

"I hope it's an honest and a proper pride," said Martin Wynn, almost mournfully.

"I have paid for the best instruction—I have spent a great deal of money on him," repeated Mrs. Henwood.

It was the one chorus to all her doings in this world; it sounded her praise, and made her famous. She was a woman fond of spending money!

"Eight years have changed him, Mr. Wynn, more than they have you and me. Eight years have not altered you much; but then we were both young—I was a very young widow!"

A fleeting thought crossed the mind of Martin Wynn that eight years *had* altered Mrs. Henwood —altered and aged her very much—she was three-and-forty now, and looked more than her age; but there were other thoughts crossing his mind, and he had not time for compliments, or for the plain-speaking which came more natural to him.

"I should like to see him," he said, suddenly.

"To see my nephew?"

Martin nodded.

"I would prefer that you did not—not at present," said Mrs. Henwood; "let him proceed his own way, and don't disturb the young man. You are very fond of preaching, you know, and I —dislike sermons."

"You go to church, or chapel?"

"In summer-time—in the morning occasionally I go to church," she said, listlessly.

"And Zachary?"

"Oh! I cannot say—I really cannot endure further cross-questioning."

"I should like to see him," repeated Martin in a thoughtful manner.

"He is not at home," replied the lady. "Shall we speak of the cabinet? I think it is time that we adjourned to the drawing-room. The servants told you that I desired it to be fitted in the recess by the drawing-room window, I suppose?"

"It is being fitted as you wished by—my assistant."

"Good gracious! have you entrusted four thousand pounds' worth of material to an assistant?" exclaimed Mrs. Henwood, starting up.

"He is to be trusted," said Martin; "and you must excuse me, but he is not to be interrupted. If he is put out, or embarrassed, he is very likely to smash part of it."

"Oh! dear," said Mrs Henwood.

Mr. Wynn meanwhile had put his hands in his pockets, and was looking down at the carpet.

"Bless the man!—what is he thinking about now?"

"I was thinking about that four thousand pounds you paid for my cabinet," said Martin. "Whew!" with a whistle that he could not immediately repress, "but that was a lump of money!"

"What did you get for it?"

"Eight hundred pounds," was the frank answer.

"Now—if ever—" began Mrs. Henwood.

"It was work at overtime, and a baby of mine; and when Stanley and Burns made me a bid for my life's task, as it were, I thought the price a good one. I put seven hundred pounds away for Christie, and was very glad that that sum stood in my name on the bank books—like a reward of merit, eh! madam? It took a load off here," and he touched his forehead as he spoke.

"And now you are discontented."

"No," said Wynn after a moment's thought, "not I. It's my own fault, and I should have held out a little longer, perhaps. I will not begrudge another man his bargain or his profits. You have paid too much—that's all—and you, I take it, can afford to pay."

"I hope so."

"It seems hard that I should have had so little out of it," said Wynn; "but that's a lesson for me, and I shall be more independent the next time. There, I'll not think of it any more. Why, it is not so hard even now, in the first flush of the news, as the wish to keep the names of myself—and my assistant—from all connection with the cabinet. Why, the rascals would have had it an antique at first."

"Your names have not been widely circulated, at all events."

"They are circulated in the cabinet—hidden in the scroll-work—emblazoned on a little secret panel which I constructed after an idea of my own—being great in secret panels, hidden drawers, and so forth."

"Great in secret drawers!" said Mrs. Henwood, betraying a wondrous amount of animation; "if

you can find a secret drawer in another cabinet of mine, I'll give you fifty pounds."

"If there is a drawer I'll find it, you may be sure. But I'll find it for love, not money."

Mrs. Henwood gave a start, then laughed a little.

"Follow me."

"Why, this gets mysterious and interesting," said Martin.

"Secret drawers are for plays and novels—are they not?"

"Very likely they are—I can't bear either plays or novels myself—they're not in my line."

He followed Mrs. Henwood from the breakfast-parlour across the hall towards the drawing-room. He increased his steps as she neared the drawing-room, as though to intercept her, but fell into his place a few paces in the rear when she turned aside and entered a room adjoining the apartment wherein Martin's assistant was at work.

"It is a tiresome old cabinet, Mr. Wynn," she said, "very valuable, I believe—but very ugly to look at."

"Bought of Mr. Braddleton?"

"No—it belonged to my father. It stood in

his library. My father would have spoken of it in his last moments, if it had not been for one of those tiresome 'strokes' which prevented him. Hence I have always been a little curious about this cabinet, for it would be disagreeable—exceedingly so—to keep notes and money hidden in it for ever."

"The old gentleman was certainly eccentric. A queer old fellow, to be sure."

"My father, Mr. Wynn," said Mrs. Henwood, with becoming dignity.

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Wynn. "Yes, that was wrong, if you have any feelings to hurt."

"To be sure I have. Do you think that I'm a brute?"

"Upon my word, madam," ejaculated Wynn, "I don't know what to think of you."

"Eight years have not added to your politeness, at all events," said Mrs. Henwood, warmly; "when will you have respect for your betters?"

"Oh! when I find them," was the conceited answer. "That's my great fault, Mrs. H.," he added more gravely, "I have too good an opinion of myself."

"So I see."

"You see a way to improve that, while I see into this cabinet," said Martin Wynn, taking the small key that she had extended to him from her hand, and unlocking two old rosewood doors.

"What is that cabinet worth, now?" asked Mrs. Henwood, with an eye to a little advice gratis in matters of furniture.

Mr. Wynn backed a few steps at this inquiry, and critically surveyed it.

"What is it worth?" he repeated after a while —"oh, about tenpence or a shilling."

"What?"

"It's a wretched piece of stuff," he said with his French shrug predominant; "my assistant turned out a better thing than this in less than six months' apprenticeship; but then he was always a bit of a wonder with his fingers. You must see this assistant of mine some day."

"I wish you would go on," said Mrs. Henwood. "If that's your assistant talking to himself in the next room, I should say that he was mad."

Martin paused to listen, until Mrs. Henwood once more reminded him that her time was valuable. He put his hand in the cabinet, and sounded

the inner panels; he put his head in and looked about him; he took his head out with a comical expression of bewilderment.

"Why, there's nothing new under the sun!" he exclaimed.

"What is it—what is it, Mr. Wynn?"

"Hanged if this isn't my idea—the idea of the cabinet in the next room. Come out, you plagiarist!"

Martin gave a tug to a shelf dividing the cabinet into two compartments, and the shelf came out with difficulty from its groove, bringing much dust into the eyes of himself and Mrs. Henwood.

"At the back of my shelf, Mrs. Henwood," said Martin, "is a small drawer, opening with a spring, giving the history of my cabinet. At the back of this shelf in my hand is all the secrets of your father, if he had any. *Voila*, Madame Henwood!"

He turned the edge towards her, and was proceeding to explain this mystery of cabinet work, Mrs. Henwood with her hands upon his arm in her excitement, when a strange stifled cry sounded from the adjoining room, followed by the fall of something heavy on the floor.

"Oh, my four thousand pounds!—oh, that

clumsy assistant of yours!" ejaculated Mrs. Henwood.

Martin dropped the shelf, and strode away to the drawing-room, looking aghast for one instant, and then rushing forwards towards the figure of a man lying full length and face downwards on the "velvet pile."

"What, Teddy, old fellow!" cried Martin, raising his assistant, and looking anxiously into his face; "why, what's the matter with you?"

CHAPTER III.

THE BROTHERS' MEETING.

A BOOK that goes back with its story, goes back as a rule in its reader's estimation. He is an author not wise in his generation, or strong in his incidents, who darts back to the bygones, and seeks to awaken an interest in things that have passed. The fathers and mothers of heroes and heroines, in whom a fleeting interest may have been aroused, the reader cares nothing concerning, and will not thank the hand that leads him back some five-and-twenty years for explanatory purposes. There is a flaw in the construction that necessitates so sad an attempt, and he is a very earnest reader that attempts the necessity.

We have deliberated as to the expediency of going back some five-and-twenty minutes with our story; we would have avoided all retrogression, and left Teddy Fernwell to tell his own tale,

had it not been imperative for the proper working of our machinery that that tale should, in this instance, be told for him. For that reason we turn back on our way—and for one chapter—to account for the eccentric behaviour of Mr. Martin Wynn's assistant.

The cabinet had scarcely been placed in the recess, when Martin Wynn was summoned to attend Mrs. Henwood.

"Look it carefully over," Martin had said before departure, "and if there's any damage, make a note of it. You and I must let it stand here—a perfect triumph for us both, Teddy."

"For you, sir," Teddy had said, with an impatient shake of the head, that implied an objection to accept any share in the great work.

"For both of us," repeated Martin, as he withdrew.

Teddy was left alone to examine the cabinet, to see that the shelves and drawers within fitted correctly, to manipulate a little with a screw-driver and a handful of screws. Busily at work there, let us see what eight years have done for the boy who came at the eleventh hour for God's help and man's. Teddy Fernwell was three-and-twenty

years of age at that time, tall of stature, strong of limb, broad-chested and powerful. He had been an ungainly youth, giving promise of an awkward manhood; but the promise had not been borne out by results, and even in his attention to the cabinet before him, an observer might have detected great quickness or handiness, allied to a certain amount of grace of movement. He stood well; it was evident as he crossed to the window for a few tools that he had left there, that he walked well; it was only when you looked him steadily in the face that it struck you that he might have been less plain with advantage to himself. On our first acquaintance with him—a boy calling at a house in Upper Ground Street in search of his brother—it may be remembered that attention was directed to his pock-marked countenance. Time had dealt somewhat leniently with that facial disfigurement, but the face was still pitted, and in excited moments was especially to be noticed. Still it was an attractive face, even a staring face, owing to two large black eyes, which dilated as you looked at them, or when the owner was energetic and in earnest, as he was very often. Those large eyes were the making of Teddy Fernwell's countenance,

Suddenly, in turning to the window again, there was more occasion for alarm, for the change of colour on his cheeks, for the dropping of the screw-driver from his hands. Crossing the lawn, with a little basket on her arm—a fancy garden-basket, fitted for such fancy trifling as its owner occasionally indulged in—came slowly a tall, graceful, pallid girl; whilst at her side, keeping pace with her, and looking now and then anxiously into her face, sauntered the man who had startled Teddy Fernwell by his presence there.

"They said that there were a thousand chances to one that *he* should be here to-day—and the one chance turns up! I felt that I should know him anywhere, at any time, no matter how the years rolled by; and I know him at once, just as I supposed I should. It's Zach—I'm sure its Zach!"

Teddy jumped upon the satin damask to see more clearly the condition of things; then jumped off again in dismay at his impulsiveness, and backed a little behind the sweep of lace curtain that floated downwards from the gilded cornice.

"I call this a lucky day," said Teddy, exultantly, "though it might do harm to speak to him—to tell him what I am, and how I came so, though he

would be very glad to hear *that*, now. Yes, it's a lucky day, and I'll score it underneath with a big broad stroke, and never forget it any more. And when the time comes for him and me to shake hands—just as the master prophesied we should some day—I'll tell Zach how I watched him once from the window of Aunt Henwood's house."

He continued to watch, darting his head away from corner panes, and occasionally bringing it against the window-shutters, whenever the figure on the lawn seemed to turn in his direction. The young man and woman standing there—the young woman snipping at some dry leaves upon a standard rose, over which she was bending slightly—were more inclined to glance occasionally in the direction of another window concealed from Teddy's view; but their attention even wavered in that direction as their discourse became more animated. The lady we saw yesterday in Park Lane—the gentleman we can scarcely say that we have met before. That young man on the lawn is a new Zach Fernwell, requiring reintroduction before he plays his part in future pages.

It was creditable to the perceptive powers of the

cabinet-worker that he should have recognized his brother, so wholly had Zach Fernwell altered for the better. Eight years have worked, before and since his time, many marvellous transformations; but few like this, changing wholly the *gamin* to the gentleman. A man of middle height, or scarcely reaching middle height, was Zach now, with a pale, but singularly handsome face, just a trifle spoilt by the smallness of his eyes. He would have been an Adonis could he have exchanged eyes with Teddy Fernwell, and Teddy would have resembled a rhinoceros. Moreover, it was a refined face—the face of a well-bred man, taking its stamp from the original or deep thoughts of its wearer;—a face earnest, keen, piercing, that seemed to look out at his future, and to possess a fearlessness to meet it, and rise in it. Not altogether a pleasant face, however; for that fearlessness of expression, when it deepened—which it did very often—might have almost implied a resolution to regard no obstacles in the way of its owner's advancement. Altogether, it was a handsome face, that women might love, and men might be interested in—certainly far from a fool's. With a bloom upon it, it would

have been considered more effeminate by the men, and less interesting by the fair sex; that waxen countenance set off the raven hair, heavy moustache, and faultless eyebrows. "Heavens! if I had had such eyebrows!" Mrs. Henwood once exclaimed; "what does a man want with such eyebrows as that, I wonder?" Zach Fernwell would have been favoured with a fine figure also, had he been less slight; that want of *physique* was against his perfectness, for it drew attention to his small stature, and to the narrowness of his chest.

"It is not a bit like Zach's face," said Teddy, in soliloquy; "and yet it's Zach, I'm sure. The true gentleman they've turned him out, at all events. He's a little chap still—I thought the young rascal never would grow much—that's the gin father tilted down his throat when he would not go to sleep. It's like the old times to see him, though neither he nor I want them back again, God knows!"

Teddy continued to watch, forgetful at last of Martin Wynn. He became conscious of his screw-driver on the floor, and picked it up after a while, by way of occupation for his hands, in which he twisted and twirled it nervously.

"How well he dresses!" Teddy murmured; "all in the right style—no doubt of that, though I shouldn't know the right style if I saw it. But he looks all of a piece, and that's gentility, I reckon. The master thinks so, and there's very little *he* don't know, bless him! I wish he would come in now for a minute, and see Zach and his sweetheart. I wonder, now, if that really is a young lady who has taken to Zach, and whom Zach has taken to? Upon my word," dropping cross-legged on the chair by the window, "I should like to know! It's a funny affair—its uncommonly interesting! Zach out there, a swell of the first water, and I in here looking at him!"

Teddy looked too long, and was detected. The swell of the first water, not totally unmindful of the house, and looking rapidly about him now and then, after a habit of his own, had become aware at last of a head bobbing to and fro at one of the drawing-room windows, and finally assuming a more barefaced position with its owner's want of caution. The lady and Zach separated without any due haste, or as if there were any occasion for a hurried parting; the lady sauntering to the next rose-bush, and the gentleman coming on very

rapidly towards the drawing-room window at which Teddy Fernwell sat.

Teddy's lower jaw dropped for an instant, and his great eyes became full of amazement; he sat there struck into stone until the brother was close upon him on the other side of the window-glass; then he rose from the chair, and backed as at a spectre advancing to confront him. What should he say?—what should he do?—he who was proud of Zach, and had nothing to be ashamed of now in his own honest self?

Before he had made up his mind, the window was shaken violently, and a very stern face looked into the room at him.

"Open this casement, fellow!" was the imperative command; and the fellow did as requested, unfastening the ormolu bolt, and pushing the French window open towards the garden. In another instant the brothers Fernwell were under the same roof..

Zach did not at once recognize his brother, who had not, however, altered so completely as himself. But then Zach was full of anger, and inclined to resent the cool audacity of a spy.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"I have been at work fitting this cabinet, sir, for Mrs. Henwood," said Teddy, whose mind was not made up as to his future course.

"You should attend to your work, and not waste time staring out into the garden. Whose workman are you?"

"Mr. Martin Wynn's."

The answer startled Zach; the tones startled him still more. His face lost its waxen hue, and was replaced by a red flush, passing away again almost as suddenly as it had come there. The lips compressed, the hands clenched and unclenched, and then all trace of surprise, emotion, recognition—or whatever it was that had affected him—vanished as completely as the blush of shame that had preceded it.

"Is Mr. Wynn here?"

"Yes," said Teddy slowly. "Would you like to see him, sir?"

"No," said Zach, after a moment's reflection; "better not. I have no knowledge—that is, no present knowledge—of that gentleman. He would not know me, and I should fail to see in him the man I met once."

"He has not altered a bit," said Teddy.

"He is no friend of mine—I don't wish to see him," was the cool rejoinder. "So this is the cabinet, my good man, that my aunt purchased yesterday. Mr. Wynn's cabinet, of course?"

"Mr. Wynn's, sir."

Teddy stepped aside as Zach advanced and examined critically the elaborate piece of marqueterie work before him. Had Zach recognized him or not, or did Zach think that he, his brother Teddy, had failed to remember him?—just as if he were ever likely to forget him, let him alter as it pleased him, or his Maker. He would wait and watch, and act accordingly. If it were better that they should not call each other brother yet, why then—so much the better! He could take the hint and stand as firm as any man. But it was a strange meeting—not the meeting that he had dreamed of, or been taught to look forward to by the Samaritans who had found him helpless by the wayside.

And Zach was waiting also, it may be said; for there is no need to disguise that fact. He was waiting also, and, despite his passiveness, he was troubled and alarmed. He was quick at recognition, and there had been no mistaking that expres-

sion on the workman's face—it told its own story, and brought back all that he was trying to outlive. Still he was a young man of wondrous self-possession; he stood his ground, and looked at the cabinet still more critically after the first beating of his heart was quelled.

"It lacks colour in part," he said carelessly; "all these things do. All these things are clever enough in their way, but scarcely worthy of the time spent upon them. You are a marqueterie worker, I presume?"

"Yes, sir."

"Fonder of looking out of window than of working, possibly," said Zach, reverting to Teddy's first offence, as though he had become conscious of neglecting his part; "you, with the world before you, should know better."

"Well, I hope I do."

"I suppose you can do a little in this way yourself now?" said Zach more airily.

"I have been apprenticed to it."

"Indeed—I am very glad to hear it."

He stopped, as though he had said or betrayed too much. He had spoken carelessly—very carelessly for him—and it annoyed him. It was not

so much the outburst of gladness at his brother's better life, as a sentence off its guard, and Teddy Fernwell, more genuine and outspoken, took it for the former feeling, and dropped the mask at once.

"And glad to see me. Say *that!*"

The screw-driver fell from his hands that were outstretched towards his brother with a frankness and eagerness at which the other crimsoned again, and then recoiled.

"Keep back, please," he said in an excited manner. "I break my word—you break your own—if I shake hands with you, or speak to you again. Man, you put me in danger by your presence here. Why did you come?"

"Why did I come," said the other, letting his hands drop to his side. "Well, not in hope of seeing you—not in bad faith—not to do you harm—most of all, not to do that, Zach."

"Martin Wynn was wrong," said Zach, speaking with rapidity, and in a lower tone, as though distrustful of eaves-droppers. "He should have known that my position here is still precarious, and that you and my father are looked upon with horror and distrust still—I say it was wrong of Martin Wynn to put me in this peril."

"Wrong it was, Zach—I see that now."

"I can't explain—I have not time, and we may be intruded upon at any moment. I will find you out, and call upon you presently—very shortly—perhaps to-night. This Wynn—where is he?"

"With your aunt."

"Good God! He will not tell her that you are here?"

"It is not likely."

"That's well—that's well," he said, licking his lips with a feverish tongue—he was strangely feverish and excited now. "This has been a folly, a rash step and nothing more, and I forgive it. Let it remain a secret between you and me, and it will be worth your while some day."

"Oh, I do not want bribing to keep my name in the background," said his brother with less humility than he had hitherto shown. "I dare-say it is best—I will believe so, if you wish it."

"You can't tell what hangs upon it—you can't imagine——"

"I can imagine everything, but that you shouldn't be as glad to see me in your heart, as I am to see you, Zach."

"I am glad in my heart, of course, to see you,"

was the answer; "but you have startled me—and I am not myself yet."

"Glad to hear that I have been fighting my way from all the evils of my early life and growing strong with it," Teddy said enthusiastically—"looking out for the day that I could even meet you with the hands of an honest man stretched out to take your own. He who saved me told me that on a brighter path I should meet my brother Zach. Is this the day—or the right road—or the right meeting upon it, after all?"

Teddy groaned, for his heart was heavy, and his disappointment keen.

"I am glad," repeated Zach; "but I can't fully explain now. When there is no one likely to step in upon us, I will tell you of our difference of position, and how it is best that it should separate us for ever."

"I thought it was for ever when we met last—I don't know why I should care about it now, if you don't. Ours are very different lives, indeed, still."

"Very different—you see that," replied Zach; "you will see all more clearly, when I can more fully explain matters. It isn't that I forget you,

or that I am likely to forget you, Teddy," he said in a changed voice; "that even for the past I am not grateful still—or do not wonder at it, and you—and all that changed it. But," with a horror in his voice and in his face that there was no disguising, "I must not know you—honest as you may have become—*I will not know you!*"

"I don't understand quite," said Teddy, very pale, but very firm now; "you are excited, and not able to answer a plain question. I daresay it's best—no doubt it's best," he corrected; "we were only boys when we had a dog-like fancy for each other, and I have been a fool to think that it could live these years in me—and you. You are a gentleman!—I am proud to see it—very!"

It was taken for irony by Zach, but it was not intended by the elder brother. In all Teddy's mortification, and despite the growing sense of their complete separation, he was proud of that little figure confronting him—that marvellous change from the ragged, shoeless being he had consorted with, and in part resembled.

"You will know all when I call upon you, or write to you. You will not be in haste?—and seek me out, for instance? Come here, in fact?" said Zach.

"Never to come here in search of you—I pledge my word."

"Where are you living?"

"With old Mr. Wynn—at the old place."

"And now, if there's money wanting, or——"

"Don't say any more just now. They're talking in the other room—I don't want to hear any more, and they may."

"I shall see you again," said Zach, with visible discomfiture; "once more—perhaps to-night, at Upper Ground Street. Be silent now—you don't know how our name is hated here—I have never borne it in this house. I rely on you."

Zach stole away through the French window again—hastily and stealthily, and Teddy locked the window after him; and then, when thinking how bravely and strongly he had kept up throughout, he gave way with a suddenness that surprised all self-command, and cast him on the costly carpet, where Martin Wynn and Mrs. Henwood found him.

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that gay nymph there, with the fluttering robe, was the first work I attempted—that Christie persuaded me to attempt—after my wife's death. Why, it's like an old almanack," said Martin, warming with his subject, almost forgetting his listeners; "there's Christie's birth, and Christie's womanhood; there's the bit of trouble with my obstinate old father sticking still to Henwood's wharf; here's all the thoughts that came to me about that Teddy—oh! here you are," he said, looking suddenly at his assistant; "are you ready, lad?"

"I have been ready some time."

Mrs. Henwood surveyed the assistant through her eye-glass for an instant, and then turned to Martin.

"The wonder, I suppose?"

"In his way—quite a wonder!"

"It's a wonder he did not seriously damage something in the room," she said. "Is he quite right in his head?"

"Well, not quite—are you, Teddy?"

This was a joke at Teddy's expense, but Teddy only gave a second sickly smile in return.

"We will take the liberty of bidding you good morning, Mrs. Henwood," said Martin.

"There's—there's the cabinet in the next room."

"I have solved that little mystery. If there should be a paper inside, informing the discoverer that he is entitled to five hundred pounds, or so, for his ingenuity, perhaps you will kindly pass it on to me."

"At what address?"

"Oh! Griffin Street, Tottenham Court Road—the old shop, that I still stick to."

"You should have risen in the world by this time!"

"I am not ambitious."

"You save money, you tell me?" said Mrs. Henwood. "Well, everybody should do that!"

"Oh! I am of a saving turn of mind. So is my assistant. This lad—I beg his pardon—this young man," clapping him on the shoulder, as he shrank back nervously at his introduction once more into conversation, "has a hundred pounds sterling in the funds."

"Who will call the working-classes improvident after that?" said Mrs. Henwood. "Yes, this assistant of yours is a wonder indeed."

She looked at him more intently through her glass, and Teddy looked down and shuffled with

his feet. He was awed by her appearance, and she admired him for that feeling, which had never been apparent in the master.

Mr. Wynn was ready to depart. He bowed to Mrs. Henwood, and prepared to leave her in the drawing-room. Mrs. Henwood, to his surprise, seemed to hesitate for a moment, then she suddenly extended her hand to him.

Martin Wynn smiled.

"I have been wondering if you had the courage," he said, taking her hand for an instant; "the difference in our positions being very great, you know!"

She coloured.

"You have done me a service this morning," she proceeded to explain. "You are a man of genius, too, whose work"—pointing to the cabinet —"remains in my house for ever. I am not above you in mind, at least."

"You are very kind to say so—possibly, that's true enough," said Martin. "Good morning."

Martin Wynn and his assistant went away, leaving Mrs. Henwood on the couch in the same graceful and ladylike position that she had assumed in the breakfast-parlour, that she had been trained to

assume years ago by a French lady, great in deportment. Martin Wynn and Teddy were let out of the front door by the same sumptuously-clad menial who had admitted them; they went silently along the drive together; silently along the road till they emerged on the fresh breezy common, where Martin Wynn began to speak.

"You have seen him, Teddy?"

"Yes."

"Strange that you two should meet, for I heard that he was abroad with his tutor," said Martin. "Well—and having met?"

"And having met, sir—I'm sorry."

"Sorry for the meeting—or for him?"

"Oh! not for him," said Teddy, quickly. "I'm glad to find him a gentleman, with the proud, big ways of one, and to be certain that he never, never can go back to the old life. I was afraid of that always—fancying that he was not strong of will, and likely to be led away. I don't think that now—so, Mr. Wynn, I am not sorry for him."

"But for the meeting—will you throw a light on that, Teddy? You know my objection to being kept in the dark on any matter."

"You have a right to know, sir, and I'll tell you.

The meeting wasn't all that I had hoped it would be, whenever it came to pass. It was all of a sudden—it was too early altogether—it frightened him!"

"Not when you told him of your better life?" said Martin Wynn, stopping for the answer.

"Still, it scared him. He had promised Mrs. Henwood never to know father and me again, or she had threatened him with her displeasure if he ever met us, or had anything to do with us—something of that kind; and he was ashamed of me—heartily ashamed of me, as was natural enough."

"Scarcely natural," said Martin Wynn, resuming his walk towards the railway station; "natural to his training, possibly—that's all. Well, Teddy, if they have made him very proud, very worldly, very stand-offish, like his aunt, for instance, we will pity such a brother, but we will not break our hearts about him."

"I'm glad to find him so changed," repeated Teddy.

"And there shall come a time, Teddy Fernwell," said Martin, stopping again to lay his hand upon his companion's shoulder, "when he shall be proud

of the elder brother, plodding on in life without a twentieth part of his advantages. There's a prophecy for you; and if I don't live to see its truth, why, you will—mark me."

"I can't expect that he will ever do that. I think it best now, just as he does, to forget all about him. You see, I have thought of him too much, because——"

"Because I would not let you forget him. Go on, Teddy; I don't mind that reproach. That kept your heart soft, and having found the key to your rusty affections, why, we opened them by degrees more and more, Christie and I together, Teddy."

"Yes."

"He thinks it better, does honest little Zach, that you should forget all about him too?" said Martin—"well, truth is a virtue. Better for you, if not for him, we'll say. Now, then, before we start off again, I give another prophecy."

Teddy looked wistfully towards him.

"There shall come a time when you will be ashamed of him in your turn—when you will temper with your shame, a fair amount of pity worthy of your close relationship. Till that time

comes, so much for Zach!" He snapped his fingers in the air, as if dismissing the subject, to which Teddy was still inclined to cling.

"He wishes to see me again—shortly," said Teddy. "I think that he is afraid that I shall not be careful enough. Just as if I would get him into trouble! Why, *he* should have known better than that."

"He is evidently a shrewd young gentleman; he will get on in the world like the Henwoods, more's the pity!"

"No—don't say that."

"And so much for him, I say," repeated Martin; "there, we puff him away, and in our lower estate, but just as honest, Teddy, we'll be more happy, for we'll be more grateful—more content."

"Yes, thanks to you, sir."

Teddy's eyes were full of tears; there was an intense gratitude in the action which extended the pupil's hand towards the master's.

"No, thanks to God, whose unworthy instrument I am," said Martin, reverently.

Teddy was silent for awhile, then, as they proceeded on once more, he said—

"I don't know what knocked me over hardly—it isn't as if I was a feeling fellow."

"You were taken sentimental, Teddy."

"And I've nothing to fret about—I always wanted Zach to have one chance. There, so much for him for the present!" said Teddy, in a tone more cheerful; "I've you to think and work for—you to pay back, by degrees, not all that I owe to you, sir, but all that I can."

"There, there—you know I don't like protestations! They're not in my line, and I have told you twenty times that if you were a trifle less afraid of me and this new world of yours—had even a better opinion of yourself, it would be none the worse for you."

"Behind me," Teddy said, with a shudder, "always the past life!"

"From which you have escaped."

"From which I never shall escape in thought. That keeps me down, and in my place, Mr. Wynn—it's just enough."

"Teddy, you're not in your usual spirits—you're not the man that nature intended you," said his master, "therefore I'll walk the nonsense out of you. No railways to-day for a morbid

young fellow like you—full of health, strength, and youth's energy, and growling about your past like an ass in a play-book. Quick march—we'll walk to London."

"I shall be glad of the walk, sir."

"Very well—left foot forward—off!"

Shoulder to shoulder the two stalwart men set their faces Londonwards, and marched away, turning their backs upon the great house where the rich woman lived. That rich woman still sat on the sofa in the great drawing-room, forgetful of her *abandon*, her grace, the right inclination of her elbow, the droop of the wrist, and the hand falling over the scroll of the couch—forgetful of the open cabinet in the next room, and the secret drawer within the shelf—forgetful of most things except the man who had recently left her.

"I hate him for his rudeness, his want of reverence, his abominable conceit!" she muttered.

Why should she have been interested in him, or have watched him year after year, then?—knowing his life and actions almost as well as he did. Was she half mad, like her old father had been?—had her wealth, and that wealth of

charms in which she believed implicitly, turned her head and made her frivolous and unnatural? She was vexed with herself and her own want of pride, for she shook her white hand at the cabinet, and ground her teeth at it at last.

"A woman of my age," she said, correcting herself almost immediately by adding, "A woman of my position in society!"

The door opened, and her daughter Lettice entered.

"My cousin Zachary has come, mamma."

"Indeed—how long has he been here?"

"A few minutes—he rode over from the station, I believe."

"Some one should have told me. Where is he?"

"In the next room I think."

Mrs. Henwood hurried into the next room, meeting Zachary face to face there.

"My dear aunt, I have ridden over to talk of business in earnest with you. How well and young you are looking!"

Mrs. Henwood for once did not flutter at the compliment. She glanced at him for an instant, then at the cabinet, and the shelf upon the floor.

"How long have you been here?"

"Not an instant."

"Go in the drawing-room, and look at my new cabinet," she said. "I will be with you shortly."

Zachary, with a submissive bow, departed, and Mrs. Henwood darted at the shelf—examined it carefully—discovered a small sliding-drawer within it, which fell with a clatter on the floor, as she held the shelf carelessly in her hands.

"Empty, after all!" she said. "Empty, after all this fuss!"

CHAPTER V.

TEDDY AT HOME.

TEDDY FERNWELL lodged in Upper Ground Street. A place too far away from business, inconvenient in more ways than one, but still a place not selected without due deliberation. He had been for years located in the second floor of a house in a neighbourhood further west, a place not more than two minutes walk from the residence of Mr. Wynn, whom he served, and who only served Messrs. Stanley and Burns on special occasions now, when work of a delicate character required the best men that high wages could procure.

Teddy had been more handy for business in his former lodging, but he had suddenly and without due notice quitted the same, and made for Upper Ground Street in hot haste. He had not sought, in the first instance, the companionship of old Mr.

Wynn and his daughter Polly—he had not intruded himself upon their notice until three months after his change of residence, thereby rendering his actions still more unaccountable.

"I thought that you were going to take care of the old gentleman and Polly," Martin had said, "when you flew away from Tottenham Court Road."

Teddy was at work on his marqueterie, but he left off at this remark, and looked sharply at his fellow-worker.

"Do they want taking care of?"

"They don't think so—but the father gets very old—and very obstinate," Martin added with a sigh; "and my sister Polly wants brightening up a little now."

"If I thought that they would care for such a fellow as I am, or that I could be of any good there!" said Teddy.

"You must think for yourself, Teddy, not for other people."

The next week Teddy was located in the younger brother's old quarters, where he still remained, the sole possessor of Zach's room, taking his breakfast, tea and supper with "the family," and paying

a fair price for his support. Martin Wynn, he thought, had wished to place him there—perhaps was nervous about him living alone in the world, or of meeting fresh temptation therein, he could not tell—and he was keenly alive to every wish of Martin Wynn's. So much so, that Martin had to keep continually on his guard against the expression of a wish, lest he should be embarrassed by Teddy's quick fulfilment of the same, at any cost, exertion, sacrifice. Teddy seldom spoke of his gratitude for his past rescue, for the efforts Martin had made to save him, and train him to a something higher and better than he had been—his words on the breezy common of Wimbledon were almost the first outpourings of his heart, and were attributable to an excess of excitement on that day —but in deeds, great and little ones, Teddy's gratitude was always evident. Teddy's one standard of perfection was Martin Wynn, and it was a fair pattern of a man taken in the aggregate, that Teddy did his best to copy. That he over-estimated Mr. Wynn was natural to his character; he had had no experiences of good men before Martin had confronted him; he did not believe, even at three-and-twenty years of age, that

there was such another man in all the world!

His affection was not demonstrative with all this; it exhibited itself very clumsily at times; he was reticent when working in Martin's cause, and for his interest; and in Martin's presence he was very thoughtful, almost shy, unless Martin's tact brought him more round to himself. Teddy was a different character in Upper Ground Street; at times he resembled, in his lighter self there, the Teddy of Drag's Court, Seven Dials, quick of action, ready of speech, a laughing, jesting Teddy, that added a new feature to that top room where Zach's rickety morals had been first taken in hand.

On the evening of that day of meeting with his brother—early in the evening before the daylight had died away—Teddy came home to the watchman and his daughter, a very different man to him we have seen at Wimbledon, the man whom these Wynns always expected to see there, and to whom their hearts had warmed long ago.

Mr. Wynn, senior, was taking his seven o'clock nap, previous to a strong cup of tea, and night duty at Henwood's Wharf, when Teddy, alive to Mr. Wynn's habits, turned the handle of the door, and entered softly. Teddy had done this for twelve

months, waking up Mr. Wynn regularly every evening, despite the care taken upon entrance, and feeling none the less acutely what a brute he was to disturb the old gentleman in that way.

"Ah! Teddy," said Mr. Wynn quite briskly, "reg'lar as the clock, I see."

"I shall make it ten minutes later—giving you ten minutes' further rest, sir."

Teddy had not adopted Zach's former designation of Mr. Wynn, senior, and the daughter was always Miss Polly to him—occasionally, even, Miss Wynn. The daughter thought it scarcely friendly of him, and too solemn, considering their position, but the watchman approved of it on the whole. He had always liked a fair amount of respect shown him—he had even insisted upon it when he was a coachman down in Warwickshire; and Teddy's politeness was approved of, and that young gentleman valued none the less in consequence. But Teddy, despite this, was on familiar terms with them; he had settled down in their midst, was ever at home there, and "one of them," just as they had fancied once that Zach would be. He had taken Zach's place in that little home, and Polly, though her heart was still true to its first

love, considered that he was "next best" to that sharp boy whom Mrs. Henwood had brought up.

"There's no occasion to make it ten minutes later," said Mr. Wynn, in reply to Teddy's last assertion. "I have my fair allowance of sleep in the daytime, and that's enough for me. How's Martin?"

"Well, sir—very well, indeed."

"And Christie?"

"Oh! bright as sunshine, to be sure," said Teddy.

"And Christie's young man?" asked Polly, with that curiosity natural to her sex; "have you heard of him lately, and how he is getting on?"

"Why, he must get on, of course, with the sunshine to smile on every step he takes—and he's not a bad sort either, Miss Polly."

"A good sort," said Polly, improving on Teddy's phrase, "as everybody says——"

"And I say too—being one more than everybody," said Teddy, clapping his hands smartly on his knees, "the best of fellows, or he should not go to Griffin Street so often."

"Why, would you stop him?" said Mr. Wynn.

"I think so," said Teddy; "I should find him

out, and ask permission to kick him downstairs, or throw him out of window. The very best of fellows, Mr. Wynn, you may depend upon it."

"She deserves the best of fellows, too," said Mr. Wynn, reflectively; "and Martin will be glad if she takes to Mr. Ubbs. 'It's only the best of men that shall ever have my Christie,' he said to me once; and it's singular that that young man whom everybody likes should turn up in the nick of time, just as we all could have wished. She likes him?"

"I daresay she does—I hope she does," added Teddy, after a moment's reflection.

"You like him, Teddy?" asked Polly.

"He's a nice quiet sort of gentleman," said Teddy; "oh! yes, I like him. Why," with a laugh that was true and unaffected, "you did not think that I objected to him?"

"Certainly not."

"He's the very man for her; like a girl in his ways, so gentle, you know," explained Teddy; "with nothing in the background to bother him. A good past to look upon, and be proud of."

"Bygones are bygones," said Polly, sententiously.

"A mother and a father, who were both respectable, pious kind of people to the day of their death—he with a first-rate character ever since he left off cutting his teeth—that's the man for Miss Christie; and I shall dance like a sailor-boy when I know that she's engaged to him. How are the geraniums?"

Teddy was tired of the subject; he crossed to the window where Miss Wynn's stock of plants was invariably arranged, and where the leaves were showing now, and began digging at the earth a little recklessly.

"Bless the man, don't do that!" cried Polly.

"Nothing like loosening the mould round the stem; and blessed if I can tell which is the harder of the two—the earth, or the flower-pot."

He laughed at his jest, and they laughed with him. After recommending fresh air to the geraniums, and being informed that they had had fresh air every day at proper hours, he came back to the patch-work rug, and stood there with his hands behind him, and his back to the empty fire-grate.

"Hope I'm not keeping the warmth from you, Mr. Wynn?" he said cheerfully; "but when I'm in a magpie mood, I like this position vastly. And

I have so much to talk about, that I'm afraid you'll have to go away with half the news, sir."

"Anything wrong?" asked Mr. Wynn, quickly.

"All as right as ninepence," said Teddy, to whom clung still many of his old street phrases—the only remnants of his past that remained with him; "that is what makes me very light-hearted to-night. Why, I have seen my brother Zach!"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Polly; "after all these years. How pleased he must have been to see you!"

"And I pleased to see him, too—you may guess that it was a surprise."

"When did he come back from the Continent?"

"I forgot to ask him that—we had a great deal to say to one another upon other matters."

"He asked after us?"

"Why, you never thought that he would not?" was the quick rejoinder; "no, I should not think that likely! Well," hurrying on with his topic, "you'll be glad to hear, both of you, that he's quite the gentleman. A little chap enough, not long and clumsy like me, and with as handsome a face as ever a man had to be proud of. A sharp, clever man he'll make, whoever lives to see it."

"I always said he would," said Mr. Wynn; "it was in him."

"And as it is just possible that he will come here one day, I thought that I would tell you, lest he should surprise you too much, Miss Wynn."

"I shall be glad to give him a good hug again," cried Polly, warming with the subject.

"Oh! he's too big to be hugged now—quite the man," said Teddy; "he has altered very much, and the alteration must not frighten you."

"Frighten me!"

"That is, worry you," corrected Teddy; "for when a man gets his age, a man who has been long away, and has been taught—oh! lots of things that we know nothing about—he changes; and Zach is so very quiet now, that you might think he was distant, or proud, or something of that kind. Then you would feel hurt, Miss Wynn—and only his way after all!"

"He will be the same to me and father—as to you, almost."

"You'll find him very quiet, not fond of talking about the old days—why, not more fond of that than I am!" added Teddy.

"But the old days here?"

"Were very close upon the other days with me and father," said Teddy, gravely; "and will be, therefore, best let alone if he comes."

"He is sure to come now and then," replied Polly.

"I shall advise him not," said Teddy, darting with alacrity into the lighter vein again; "he's a big swell, you know—and what would his aunt, and all his big swell-friends, say to acquaintances like us? He *might* like to come too often, and then lose all his chances, and turn everybody against him. You know what a proud woman Aunt Henwood is?"

"She will not change our Zach," said Polly.

"Not at heart. At heart always a good fellow—but he is a man with a way to make in the world, and I for one shan't presume on past acquaintance with him."

"Acquaintance!" cried Polly; "that's a nice word for a brother to use."

"Then I always was a rough, unfeeling kind of fellow," said Teddy, "and I never could see the use of feelings in people like us. Things very much in the way, aren't they, Mr. Wynn?"

"Get away with you!" said Mr. Wynn; "and,

Polly, pour out the tea, and try to understand Teddy to-night, for *I* can't."

"Why, what is the matter with me?"

Mr. Wynn did not respond, and Teddy did not press the question. Tea finished, Mr. Wynn was assisted into his great-coat—that harness in which he had evidently resolved to die, for he clung pertinaciously to his old place, and became more obstinate with every effort made to bring about his resignation. Mr. Wynn departed, and Teddy began to talk of the lodgers in the house—for Teddy was full of interest in those who lived about him, and was a favourite with them, after the old fashion of the Drag's Court days. He heard the news of the day—how the printer on the ground-floor had been threatened by the water-rate, and what a drawback his wife's confinement of twins was at that particular period—how the man in the front room had not been at home all day, and how the woman at the back had got a situation as housekeeper, and was full of spirits, as was natural enough, after three months ill-luck. He had not heard all the news, when the house reverberated with a summons at the door.

"That's very likely to be Zach, I fancy," said Teddy, colouring very much.

Polly leaped to her feet, but Teddy was already at the door.

"Keep here, please, Miss Wynn," said Teddy, "and I'll bring him up to you. My place first, you know—always."

"Yes—that's true."

Teddy went down-stairs, but the printer had already forestalled him. The visitor was in the passage explaining his business—that visitor the Zachary Fernwell for whom the brother had been waiting all the evening.

By the light of the flickering candle in the printer's hand, Zach recognized his brother.

"I have come at once—I thought that it was best," said Zach; "you might have left me with a false impression. Put on your hat, and step into the street with me."

"Thank you, Mr. Parks," said Teddy, to the printer, who seemed disposed to remain with his back to the passage wall, "we can find our way up-stairs. The good lady is better to-night, I hope?"

"Much better, thankee," answered the printer; "and the little uns—both asleep at once, by Jingo!"

"Ah! that's lucky. This way, sir."

Zach hesitated.

"I wish to speak to you alone. I would rather not go up-stairs."

The printer having departed into his room, Teddy spoke more freely.

"You had better see Polly Wynn—the first friend—and be prepared for her, than take her by surprise. Don't dash her down, all at once like—some men might," he added after a pause; "but talk a little of the old days, to make her think that she hasn't quite grown out of your knowledge. It isn't much to ask, I hope?"

"No."

"After that, and as soon as you like, I am at your service, Zach."

"What is the use of going upstairs to embarrass her and myself," said Zach, inclined to stand his ground still—"after all, it really is no good."

"Hush!" said Teddy, quickly, as a light shone from the upper floor, and a face looked over the balusters—a face that forty years had not scored very deeply yet—"this way, Zach. Oh! there's no occasion to fear surprising her," he added,

loudly; "she has been expecting you for many years, and looking forward to this meeting, just as you have. And it's kind of you to come all this way to thank her, first of all of them!"

A figure darted down the stairs at this, candle in hand, and, passing Teddy, made a dash at Zach, bestowing on him that "good hug," which she had promised herself, and greasing the shoulder of Zach's coat during the operation.

"My dear, dear boy, I knew that they wouldn't teach you to forget your Polly, let them try never so hard! It's like the old times to see you once again!"

CHAPTER VI.

ZACH THROWS A LIGHT UPON HIS POSITION.

ZACHARY FERNWELL made the best of the *contretemps*. A moment's warning to prepare was sufficient for him, and his brother had put him on his guard, and implied all that was necessary and befitting. He had wished at that time to be spared a meeting of this character, but it had come, and he was ready for it.

"I am very glad to see you, Polly," he said; "shall we go upstairs, and talk a little of the old times, before I carry Teddy away?"

"Carry him away!—where?"

"On business—a little business together, he and I."

"Come upstairs," said Polly Wynn—"no one more welcome in this house of ours than you, Zach. I suppose," she added, putting suddenly the candle so close to his face, that he flinched

back, "you're not too proud to be called Zach by all old friends?"

"No—not too proud for that."

They went upstairs together into the room on the second floor, which had been tenanted by the Wynns for many years, which Teddy had once advised the Wynns to vacate, wherein Zach's first glimmerings of light had come, and Zach's first feeble steps towards a better estate had been made, thanks to the woman with the tear-filled eyes, watching the wanderer in that house. And Zach, the wanderer, looked round the room, and could not steel his heart against all associations connected with that humble dwelling-place. The place had not changed, like him; it had not altered in one particular since he stood last a boy there; he could value at its truer worth the care and love that had found its way to him, than in that time when he suspected a snare in every kindness. There was the patch-work rug, only a trifle less vivid in its colouring than when he used to crouch upon it, and stare into the fire; there was the same set of chairs, with the volatile cushions, and that capacious emporium, easy-chair, or whatever it was, wherein the watchman took

his nap before night-duty; there was the china teapot on the mantelshelf, where Polly kept her silver thimble, and whence Teddy stole it; and surely they were the same geraniums, "green in the wood," that were fighting against the winter eight long years ago? In eight years he had changed very much—he had been polished exceedingly, and had hardened in the polishing bestowed upon him by a clever, but worldly teacher; but here nothing seemed to have changed, and he stepped back to the old scene as into a purer atmosphere. He felt less worldly, and he breathed more freely; it was a change that he could not account for, and he made no effort to repress it.

He sat down at the table, and his brother and the old friend took their places near him, keeping their faces turned towards his own with an intentness that perplexed him after a while.

"They are like the old times come back," he murmured—"I wonder how it would have been with all of us if I had never gone away?"

"Not so well, I daresay," said Polly; "you have been a lucky young man, and, I hope, will make your fortune."

"I hope so too," said Zach, with a laugh that

was a little forced; "I must not grumble at my start, and I shall do my best—to rise."

He was silent for awhile after this. Polly became absorbed in his changed looks, and his outward exterior, and Teddy, with his hands in his pockets, sat also absorbed in his brother.

Zach said, after a long pause,

"I thought that I would let you know, Polly, how I stand in the world; and prove to you that I have not forgotten the old home, or grown too proud for it. I might not have faced you at once to tell you this," he added, suddenly remembering that his heart was less tender when he knocked at the door a few minutes since, and becoming mindful, also, of his brother's steady, melancholy stare, "but I should have taken the first opportunity, at all risks."

"Risks!" Polly repeated wonderingly.

"The truth is," said Zach, "that it *is* a risk to come here—that I risk every chance to which I have been toiling by venturing to this place. My life has not been all sunshine on the higher ground —you must not think that, either of you—I have had much to endure, to put up with, to conceal. You cannot guess how hard and cold and vain a

woman Mrs. Henwood is, and how her pride resents, as an affront to herself and all that she has done for me, one backward step, one backward glance in this direction."

"Oh! I would go home at once, then," said the alarmed Polly. "I would not risk so much for so poor a gratification—you with the chances all before you now. You've seen us—now I'd go away."

"Presently, I will," said Zach quietly. "You, a sensible woman, I knew would realize the peculiar nature of my position. I am not a selfish man—far from it," he added, egotistically; "but there is a duty before me—a duty even to the woman who gave me a good education, and did the best she could for me. You see that too, Teddy."

He was aggrieved at his brother's silence—at his fixed look towards him, and puzzled at it also. He turned to his brother to break the spell, as it were, of this taciturnity. Teddy quite started at the appeal.

"I'll try and see it all as clearly as I can," said he—"talk to her now. I'm thinking my hardest, Zach, and I'm not so bright to-night, I fancy, as I might be."

Zach turned to Polly again. He addressed her, but he spoke to Teddy indirectly.

"My name is Henwood to the world—I have taken the name at her wish—she hates the other intensely. She threatens me with expulsion from her home, and the loss of all her patronage, if I seek to confront my father or brother ever again. On all my past—on the friends I knew before I came to her house, an interdict is set; but I have dared all to come here and tell you this, thinking that you would see more clearly the motives which keep me away, and believing always in the good feeling that I entertain towards you."

"I will believe it always, Zach—why shouldn't I?" cried Polly; "if you hadn't broken your promise to Mrs. Henwood to come here after me and Teddy—or if you had passed me in the street, I should have guessed well enough the truth. I knew that we were parted when I left you at the grand house at Wimbledon; and if we parted for good, still it was for *your* good—and I didn't fret about it."

Zach glanced once more at Teddy, still rigid and impenetrable; then said more hastily, and more naturally,

"I was at my best here before my father came to thwart my hopes of honesty, and I fancy after that time that all the good went out of me."

"What!—when you——"

"There—there, we'll say no more about it, Polly," he said, rising—"good or bad, I have decided on my future, and I shall make a good man of business, at least."

"I'm sure you will. And something more than a man of business, or you would not have come here to-night. And, Zach," she said, laying her little plump hands on his arm, and looking into his face affectionately, "as you go up higher and higher, getting greater and richer with every step, and further and further away from me, think that I shall be very glad to watch you at a distance, and content to watch you thus, knowing that you don't forget us all. *But*," her look assumed once more that intentness of expression, at which Zachary Fernwell had already winced, "you have no right to promise Mrs. Henwood anything that parts you from your brother. More, you have a right to tell her——"

"Zach and I will talk this over in the street together," said Teddy, interrupting her—"we

understand each other very well—we have not forgotten each other, and I read it all, just as he does, like a story book. You're a good friend—one of the best of friends to me—but," here his voice assumed a strange dignity that stopped all interference in his favour—"but you must not plead for a man who is able to speak for himself. I'm ready, Zach."

Zach parted with Polly Wynn, succumbing to a second embrace with an ease that showed his adaptability to circumstances; then he followed his brother downstairs and out of the house. They walked on silently together till they were a long way down the narrow street, then Zach began:

"You are offended with me, Teddy?" he said at last.

"No, not offended."

"You are surprised at the alteration in me?—but I cannot re-mould myself."

"That's a better phrase than the other, Zach," replied Teddy—"yes, I am surprised."

"You are altered too—the new sphere in which you have mixed has changed you very much."

"I hope it has," was the quick response; "or I would not be walking with you, even in this dark

street. I think that my new life, my honest life, Zach, gives me a claim to that—for this once."

"Surely it does. And if you could believe how glad I am to know that, Teddy," said Zach, eagerly; "and what a load it has taken from my mind!"

"I believe it—really," replied Teddy; "but still I am surprised—and it will take much time and thought to get over my astonishment."

"At what?"

"Oh! at everything about me and you—I can't explain more clearly—I was always clumsy in my explanations."

"I have come here to explain much myself, Teddy," he said; "to show you upon what a single hair hangs my position. If I were dashed down now, I should be worse off than you."

"I think you would."

"Judge, then, how necessary it is for me to sacrifice my natural feelings to my future, and to be content to proceed alone in life. It is a struggle for me now to say this, and to bid you forget me. Your moral change does not affect our relative positions towards each other—Mrs. Henwood would remind me of my word, and

would distrust every motive that led me in your direction. I do not say that you are to forget me for ever—that there may not come a time when I shall be more my own master, and better able to stand my ground—but I am not strong now."

"Zach," said Teddy, "you were never very strong—I don't think that you will be ever possessed of that strength that bears up against trouble or temptation, and I see well enough the weakness that is natural to you, and which you can't help. I don't complain—I'm not able to advise—you are a better scholar, and should know what is better to do than I—only don't worry me with fifty reasons when one will suffice."

"But I remember that without you, I should not be in this position, Teddy—don't think me all that is base and ungrateful. If I have one good feeling left, by God! it is the remembrance of this man!"

He struck his brother almost angrily upon the shoulder in his excitement; he was weak enough, and selfish enough, but the meeting with his brother, and that brother's manner, had had its effect upon him. Teddy, detecting remorse, per-

haps love in Zach's stifled tones, turned quickly to him.

"Zach, you are not happy!"

"No," was the mournful answer; "I can't say that I am, for I am always in danger."

"We will take one danger away," said Teddy; "you need not be afraid of my stepping in and alarming any friends of yours. Whatever my life is now, I am conscious—horribly conscious—of what that life has been, and how it may leap forth at any moment to shame you and all who have taught me better. Behind me always, Zach, the prison!"

Zach walked on silently; he did not intrude upon his brother's remarks; they were telling in his favour, and he had no further cause to plead for separation.

"Therefore, I shall never seek to meet for your own sake," continued Teddy; "more, I will shun you always—just as you wish—unless there should come to you need of my poor help, by any strange chance that forces us together."

"And there may be need of mine, Teddy—pressing need, and then——"

"And then we'll talk about it," said Teddy;

"there is no occasion to waste words now on the subject. Have you anything more to tell me?"

"I do not know that I have," was the reply.

"Or to ask me?"

"N-no," said the brother.

"I thought you might have been curious—as *I* might have been in your place—concerning an escape from the streets and the devil. Grateful even—as *I* should have been, with all my heart—to know that by a miracle, as it were, the brother who was feared so much had been taught the difference between good and evil—to know the teacher, and thank God for the mercy that placed him in the way of one despairing. You, Zach," he added, very mournfully, "are not curious concerning this?"

"Yes, I am," responded Zach; "will you tell me?"

"It is a story easily guessed at. I was saved by Martin Wynn; I have been taught by him to earn my own living honestly—to love him and all belonging to him. I think sometimes that it would be the best end of my life to die for him, to show how grateful I am—I can't in any other way,

and I would no more care—if my death would do him any good—than I cared for picking a pocket once. I feel that I ought to do something," said Teddy with enthusiasm, "and nothing comes in my way to help him, and never will, for God will help a man like that, I think. And yet, Zach, he came to me first, because I went to him, and—*lied.*"

"Yes—I know," said Zach, and his head was bent forwards as he walked on by his brother's side.

"That lie is ever between us, and keeps me down, renders me ashamed even yet to look him in the face. But what could have been done to save you, but the biggest, blackest lie that I could invent? I feel that I built my better future on that lie, and some day the foundation will crack beneath me, and let me through away from him."

"It shall not," said Zach impulsively; "it is not likely now," he added with more discretion. "You should not think of all this—it belongs to years ago. It is," with a palpable shudder, "a very unpleasant reminiscence."

"We'll drop it," said Teddy, "just as we drop each other after to-night, quickly, and without a fuss about it. I shall see the sense in your coming

to me, as clearly as you do, only it takes time to master it. You don't belong to my life any more —and I will live without you happily enough."

He extended his hand, and Zach shook it in his own; but when their hands were separated, Teddy did not immediately withdraw.

"You *may* want me some day, as I've said," Teddy remarked. "You're in a queer house where queer things turn up; and though you're clever and sharp enough—I see it in your face—still, you're not strong of will."

"My will is like iron," said Zach, not pleased at Teddy's assertion.

"In one way, possibly," was the dry answer; "but still you're weak, and that weakness may lead you, heaven knows where, Zach. I hope it won't, with all my heart—I hope now that we shan't face each other any more. Three times have we said good-bye to one another, and yet we meet again, always for strange reasons of our own. This morning I was disappointed with our meeting—very—but I am glad that it has come and passed, and killed all the foolish thoughts that I had had concerning it. I should have known better at three-and-twenty years of age!"

"I have been going to ask you more than once concerning—*him?*"

"He has been abroad," replied Teddy; "you understand. He got into trouble, or trouble overtook him, and he—went abroad."

"For how long?"

"Seven years."

"He will come back, then?" said Zach.

"Sometimes I hope that he will," said Teddy in reply.

"Good God!—what for?"

"I can't say—it's only sometimes that I fancy that I should like to see him and talk to him for a while—and there are times when I feel afraid of myself, just as you do."

"It is very odd."

"Oh! I have grown a very odd fellow," said Teddy carelessly; "a man with odd thoughts that disturb me, give me odd dreams at night, wake me up, and won't let me dream at all. Why, Zach, I am sometimes envious of your chances, and wish that I might grow as rich as you, and have time—heaps of time—upon my hands."

"Do you want any money? Can I——"

"No, thank you," quickly answered Teddy,

"not just now. You save money instead of me, and think, now and then, of what is the best to do with it, and of the children who are like ourselves —*just* like we were, Zach, only with nobody to save them."

"I wonder," said Zach, "what you really think of me?"

"Why, that you will do your best, to be sure—for there was always good in you, and I see the good in you now, though I'm not so proud of you as I thought I should be. You see," he added, with more warmth, "I wanted you to come to me, and offer to be friends for ever, and then I —like a hero, ho! ho!—was to give you up, and tell you to wait for years and years, until my name went far enough back in the charge-sheets of *the station-house.* I wanted you to be more sorry to part with me than you are. There, that's the truth!"

Zach was moved by this frankness, as he had not been moved before that night. He shrank within himself, feeling for the first time an immeasurable inferiority beyond all gauge—guessing for the first time how they both had altered.

"I act for the best," said he.

"I know it. I know all this is for the best too

—no one better. Good-bye again. We needn't come the sentimental in Upper Ground Street—sentiment don't pay, Zach!"

He turned, and Zach went on his journey. The younger brother walked rapidly away, disturbed in thought and purpose, and very much perplexed. Before him, during the last two years, he had but seen the boy whom he had left last—generous in his way, deep-feeling in his way too, but unprincipled, untruthful, and a thief; and now a new brother, who was a riddle to him, who had not forgotten him, whom from that night he should never understand, shunning all knowledge as he did. That brother touched him suddenly on the arm again.

"I had forgotten," he gasped.

"Forgotten what?"

"You had forgotten too," said Teddy, "the old man at the wharf—the first of the Wynns who led the Fernwells to the light. He's very old now—and we must not pain him, you or I, if we can help it. What happened at that wharf—what might have happened—should keep us ever grateful towards him. Why, Zach, what would he think of you, if you did not bid him good-bye also

—you, the man he is so proud of?"

"I will go to him—yes, you are right."

He turned and went rapidly back towards the wharf whence his first step upward had been taken, and Teddy dropped behind, and let him proceed at his own pace away from him.

"Ah! if Martin Wynn had only had the bringing of him up," said Teddy, humbly, "Zach *would* have been a credit to him, and nothing against him —ever!"

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIE'S YOUNG MAN.

TEDDY went to business in Griffin Street, Tottenham Court Road, at the usual hour. He had learned habits of punctuality under Martin Wynn, and he was not likely to forget them in his service.

The servant opened the door,—Martin Wynn kept a servant now,—and Teddy went at once into the front parlour, which was at this especial time the workshop. Eight years ago, Martin Wynn, for the benefit of his child, and for the sake of companionship, had constituted part of the drawing-room a workshop; but with increase of state, or position, or with an eye to "the proprieties," and to his apprentice, he had altered all that, dismissed the lodgers, and taken more room unto himself. He was already at his work when Teddy entered; he looked up quickly over a little table that he was inlaying with ebony and ivory.

"All right?" he asked.

"All right!" responded Teddy, cheerfully.

"And all right *means* all right?" said Martin Wynn. "And you have not come here to turn our ale sour!"

"No, sir. For the little breeze yesterday, I'm better."

"As it should be, Teddy."

"I saw him again last night, sir—we had a long talk together, and I think that we are the better for it, the couple of us."

"He was sorry for the morning's dispute—eh?"

"He and I came to a fair understanding, sir," replied Teddy; "he said it was best, and I saw it was best—and we talked to each other till his heart opened a little wider, as I felt sure it would. Having seen him—having parted from him—being certain that he will get on now in life, I am the better and the stronger for it, *really!*"

"Really and truly, as my Christie used to say—my Christie, whose birthday it is to-morrow, Teddy."

"Yes, I know."

"Why, how do you know?"

"Didn't I come last year, and the year before

that, and every year, with Mr. Wynn and Miss Polly?"

"Yes; but I did not fancy that you were clever at dates. And you'll come to-morrow, of course, along with the good souls from Upper Ground Street. The good obstinate souls," he corrected; "who would drive a saint wild with their independence."

Teddy Fernwell and the good souls entered an appearance the next day at Martin Wynn's house, and wished Christie "many happy returns;" and Christie thanked them with a very elaborate curtsey for all good wishes looked and expressed. Christie Wynn had become a bright-faced, pretty woman of twenty years—graceful, light, and sparkling, as befitted her age and her father's home. Martin Wynn required a genial presence in his chamber, to keep the shadows from them; and he had been blessed with a daughter whom he could respect as well as love and admire. Years ago he had been afraid of her becoming old-fashioned, she regarded things so practically; but she had been only a girl with the cares of housekeeping on her mind; and now that the tide in the affairs of housekeeping ran on smoothly,

and there were no odd shillings to be anxious about, Christie was what nature intended. She had been brought up by a truthful father—a man who was religious without being ascetic—and that father's training had not been ill-directed, but had tended to the profit of the daughter. She was the true companion for Martin Wynn, who would have grown more stern, perhaps more worldly, in his long widowerhood, had it not been for the influence exercised in her turn. In the latter days she could repay back with interest the father's teaching; and the father was grateful for it, and thanked God for it. She was the true companion for Martin Wynn, we say again—the daughter he deserved to have for all his care and love—just the daughter we can imagine Martin having —with the father's good qualities predominant, and toned down somewhat to a true feminine standard. They came of a good stock, these Wynns.

All that the world possessed of this particular breed of Wynns was present on the occasion of Christie's twentieth birthday; and it was a pleasant sight enough, and worth a stroll to Griffin Street. Mr. Wynn, senior, was in the post of

honour, that is, in the easiest chair in the room, looking his age, perhaps, owing to that formidable bend in his back, but looking full of life still, and with his hair as erect, bristly and energetic as ever. Between him and her Aunt Polly sat Christie; whilst facing them sat Martin Wynn, Teddy Fernwell, and Mr. Ubbs, more frequently alluded to in our preceding chapter as Christie's young man.

A singular young man this Mr. Ubbs—very tall, very thin, with a giraffe aspect about the throat, which had a nob in the middle of it that rose and fell, swelled and diminished with a suppressed excitement, a nob which never got any further —evidently a stopper that kept down the feelings exceedingly well, and was therefore of service to a very mild and exemplary young gentleman. A young man of a serious turn, or his meek, melancholy visage belied him. It was an old-looking young face, and the picture of placidity—the result of rigorous teaching, an even temperament, an uneventful life, and a bung in the throat. Everybody at chapel liked Mr. Ubbs, because he agreed with everybody, subscribed to everything, was never out of his corner pew, and

had illimitable faith in the minister; everybody outside the chapel, and beyond the pale of the sect, liked Mr. Ubbs also, for the reason that he was the soul of honour in business transactions, not hard upon anybody, gentle as a woman in his speech, anxious to help the unfortunate, and possessed of plenty of money, thanks to bachelor uncles and maiden aunts of good property, who had all died early to oblige him. An early dying race for the matter of that, these Ubbs, the present gentleman at eight-and-twenty years of age being the only Ubbs left on that side of the water. If there were any serious drawback to this character having "the smallest possible part" to play in these pages—a poor run of two chapters, at the utmost—it was his extreme placidity, his dead level. His gentleness was a trifle aggravating to more irritable beings; and his ignorance of the world, and what the world beyond his own small hemisphere was doing, rendered him far from a conversational companion. He was more at home at Wynn's house than anywhere else, chiefly because he had taken to Martin Wynn, and Martin Wynn's daughter. He always enjoyed himself in Griffin Street, though he said very little, and

smiled less. He was fond of listening to people more gifted with loquacity than he; but no subject gave him any particular degree of animation, and had he had any enemies, they would have thought him half an idiot. But his friends said that he was a good, sensible, and pious young man, and we shall have no occasion to prove in this instance how easy it is for friends to be deceived. That he was sensible in fixing his affections on Christie Wynn was evident enough; he saw how her lighter, brighter character would influence his own, and shed a radiance round his home, just as it had round her father's; but he had not clearly enunciated these doctrines yet to Christie, though he had to Christie's father, who had received them courteously, and told him to bide his time, and take his time.

It was a good offer for Christie, Martin saw; it took away an anxiety as to Christie's future; but he would not attempt in any way to force his daughter upon Mr. Ubbs, and he had not hitherto witnessed in her any great signs of affection for that gentleman. He had confidence in Mr. Ubbs winning upon her heart by degrees, as Mr. Ubbs did win upon most people by gradual but sure instalments.

There had been a few presents tendered to Christie, and accepted. Mr. Ubbs had startled her by a writing-desk of prodigious proportions, which a boy had brought home on a wheelbarrow. Mr. Wynn, senior, and Polly had had their humble contributions to bestow; Martin had been generous with a silk dress, that Polly was to make up at her brother's sole expense; Teddy Fernwell gave nothing but his good wishes and stammered over them. These protestations occurred after tea, when they were facing each other, as heretofore described; when Martin Wynn had wine and cake upon the table, and there were no signs of business about; when it was generally understood that this was a happy day, and a high holiday, as befitted the importance of the occasion; when the hour was half-past six, and there was daylight yet, and to spare, in the precincts of Griffin Street.

"I think we'll have a song," said Martin, who was master of the ceremonies, "or it will not seem half a birthday."

"Ah! let us have a little singing," said his father, "before I start to business. Christie shall begin."

"Confound that business!" ejaculated Martin;

"if I would not be ashamed of business at your age! Why don't you resign, and ask for your pension, like a reasonable man?"

"I'm not too old for it—or too proud for it, Martin," was the reply; "it's a task I have got used to, and that I like. Ah! I don't know exactly where my substitute's to come from some day—*that* bothers me very much, for I can't be always on the premises. But we never agree upon that subject, Martin—it upsets your pride to think that I won't be a burden to you. Why, as long as I live," he added with a cheerful crow of satisfaction, "I don't mean to be a burden to anybody."

"If you can help it, sir, of course," timidly suggested Mr. Ubbs.

"Why, of course, I take that into consideration."

"Exactly—I have no doubt you do. Excuse my mentioning it."

Mr. Wynn, senior, graciously inclined his head, and then resumed the subject of his discourse. He had forgotten that he had asked Christie to favour the company with a song, until Teddy broke in upon his observations.

"Hold hard, sir!" he said, rather brusquely perhaps, "Miss Christie's going to sing, if you remember."

"My memory's very good, Teddy. I'm not likely to forget. Now, Christie, what a time you take, to be sure—like all fine ladies with good voices, and here we've been waiting these last five minutes!"

Christie sang after this reproof. She had a sweet, if not a powerful voice, and she had the very rare gift of singing with expression. It was a voice that most people would have liked to hear, and to which these honest everyday folk paid the compliment of rapt attention. It was sung without accompaniment, although Martin Wynn had speculated in a piano, and added music to the rest of Christie's accomplishments; but Mr. Wynn, senior, liked his music drawn off naturally, and with no new-fangled twangs in it, and Mr. Wynn, senior, always had his own way there. Therefore, it was a ballad ended very speedily, taking the auditors by surprise, and leaving them motionless and staring, till Christie's musical laugh brought them to their senses.

"Why, how cross and dull you are all looking,

she said; "that is the effect of my sentimental ditty, I'm afraid."

"And Christie never likes sentiment," said Mr. Wynn. "I am very glad that she takes after her father in that."

"Sentiment's all sham!" affirmed the watchman, "and you take after *your* father, Martin, just as it should be. I brought you up in the way you should go—though you did dissent from the Church out of pure obstinacy, boy—and you have gone pretty straight, keeping sentiment in the background."

"I think sentiment is a very good thing in its way," said Mr. Ubbs. "Of course, I have not had anything to do with it; but don't you think so, Mr. Fernwell?" he said, appealing to Teddy.

Teddy quite started at being thus directly addressed. He preferred to sit still, and observe, and think at this small reunion—"sitting in state," he termed it to Polly. He was shy in company; only his most intimate friends of Drag's Court days were aware of his powers of conversation, keen sense of humour, and readiness at repartee. Under favourable circumstances, Teddy could still render himself very agreeable, and very quaint; but the

wind and tide had been against fair sailing during the last week, and Teddy was disposed to hold his peace, and keep Mr. Ubbs company. Like Mr. Ubbs, he had been enjoying himself very much in his fashion, until his opinion on sentiment was suddenly required.

"Well, I don't think it is," was his sharp answer, however.

Teddy was seldom at a loss for a reply, or took time for grave consideration of his words; this was natural to both estates.

"Why not, Teddy?" asked Martin, always anxious to draw upon the reflective faculties of his pupil.

Teddy blushed again, rubbed his hair the wrong way, then said, with his customary rapidity of utterance,

"Because it's a fine word meaning fine feelings, I take it. I don't know what else means sentiment."

"But real feeling—that's my definition of sentiment," said Mr. Ubbs.

"Ah! real feeling, when there is a real occasion for it!" cried Martin, bringing his hand down vigorously on his knee—"that's very different.

I like men in earnest—looking ahead of them earnestly, holding their ground, and keeping back the impostors; trying to get as much legitimate happiness out of the world as they can for their money; sensitive to the real troubles of others, and despising the weakness that gives way to false ones."

He looked hard at Teddy, as though he feared that one person of that company was still inclined to brood upon an affair of no consequence, and Teddy coloured again, taking the hint to himself. Martin Wynn thought that his assistant was still pondering over the meeting with Zach, when Zach was far from Teddy's thoughts that evening, at least. And Teddy mistook Martin's thoughts altogether—so misconceptions arise when people will not speak out.

The time stole on; Martin passed the wine round; there was more singing on the part of Christie, on the part of her father, who had a baritone voice, that he would have been more proud of had he possessed the requisite time to think of its capabilities; on the part of Polly Wynn, who could not sing a note, but would have thought it high treason not to contribute to the

general harmony; and on the part of Teddy, who sang rather worse than Polly Wynn. Mr. Ubbs did not sing, and apologized for a bad memory, and no tune in him; Mr. Wynn, senior, would have sung, "Heigho ho, Tantivy!" if he had been asked, and, had it not been his grandchild's birthday, would probably have resented the slight. Down in Warwickshire every Saturday night, at the "Sir Guy's Arms," that "Heigh ho, Tantivy," had been a triumphant success.

"I hope that you are enjoying yourself, Mr. Ubbs?" asked Martin.

"I—I never remember spending so nice an evening. It's delightful!"

Christie had crossed to Teddy by this time, and was looking him hard in the face.

"I wonder what makes you so dull, Teddy?" she said—"do you mind telling me?"

"Well, Miss Christie," he answered, "upon my honour, I'm not dull!"

"Why, you haven't laughed once to-night, and we all like to hear you laugh."

"Ah! but I'm very happy. To sit here in a corner watching you all, is always to enjoy myself thoroughly."

"Happy in watching other's happiness—do you mean that?"

"If it does not sound sentimental," replied Teddy.

Everybody being happy, then, rendered the evening a happy one. Little birthday-parties, family reunions like this, were quite events in the lives of these quiet people. They were sensational meetings, looked forward to, and looked back upon—breaks of sunshine upon gentle lives, that were too pure and peaceful in their monotony for the monotony to be observed. We, of a faster order of creation, can afford to laugh at these honest folks' ideas of spending an evening; we, who are *out* "a great deal," and "very gay"—when we are out, dancing the fandango, perhaps, to a castanet accompaniment—may wonder very much where lay the enjoyment of Mr. Wynn's party. But there was considerable enjoyment, nevertheless, in Griffin Street; and Teddy was happy, as asserted, only it was a graver kind of happiness than he usually indulged in, and so had puzzled Martin Wynn and Christie. He had made up his mind long ago always to be happy in that house—happy as he was grateful—and he had

tried very hard of late years. He had succeeded, he believed, and we will take his word for it. Therefore, Teddy Fernwell *was* happy that night.

The party broke up at an early hour. Mr. Wynn, as bound by contract at Henwood's Wharf, left at half-past eight, convoyed by Polly, Ground Street way; at ten o'clock all these early birds assembled in Griffin Street were preparing to flutter to their nests. Supper was over; Teddy, hat in hand, was bidding them good night; Mr. Ubbs, who had waited for a precedent, was ready to follow suit.

"I am going your way, Mr. Fernwell," Mr. Ubbs had said, to Teddy's astonishment; therefore Teddy waited for Christie's young man, and they both went into the street together. Teddy looked upon Mr. Ubbs as a superior being to himself, and was flattered by the offer of his company. He went to Martin Wynn's chapel, and knew well enough what Mr. Ubbs was thought of there; and though Mr. Ubbs was friendly in his manner to him, and had not a particle of pride in his composition, still he awed Teddy at times by his goodness. For the young man of the name of Ubbs had been

good from his cradle-side, and behind that young man of the name of Fernwell *was* the shadow of which he had complained, and it would always keep him in his place, he knew. Grateful, intensely grateful for his change in life, and to those who had been the cause of it; but feeling an inferiority to all denizens of his new world, succumbing to them with readiness, and making all the room for them they wished. Ever in the background, then—as he had told Martin Wynn and his brother Zach—the shadow of the prison!

"You are going straight home, Mr. Fernwell?" asked Mr. Ubbs.

Teddy answered in the affirmative.

"I will go your way, then. Do you mind taking my arm?"

"If you don't mind taking mine—oh! no."

In this amicable conjunction they went on together, Mr. Ubbs coughing several times in the vain effort to clear his throat of the bung. Mr. Ubbs was somewhat embarrassed, and Teddy, quick to observe everything, saw that at once, and resolved to help him.

"It has been a capital evening," he said.

"Very."

"Always sure of a pleasant evening at Mr. Wynn's—there is everything to make things pleasant there," said Teddy.

"Exactly so. Mr. Wynn, and Mr. Wynn's daughter, very amiable, bright, kind, and so forth. You know, Mr. Fernwell, why I call there very often?"

"I can guess, sir."

"It's no secret—I never liked any secrecy about my actions, and I have no one to please but myself, now my dear mother has gone. You know as well as the rest that I'm thinking of marrying Christie Wynn—I'm proud to be thinking of it, really?"

Teddy nodded.

"Well, the strange part of it is, Mr. Fernwell, that—that everybody seems to know what I *am* thinking about, except Miss Wynn herself. It's very remarkable—I never heard of a case like it, did you?"

"No, Mr. Ubbs."

"And if I thought that I should not be accepted in that quarter, or that Miss Wynn adopts that peculiar manner on purpose to keep back any expression of my feelings, I should feel it my duty

to withdraw without paining her by any rash proposal. I would not be rash, for all the world. Therefore"—This was a long speech, and required a fresh supply of breath, which Mr. Ubbs took before proceeding further, took with a gurgle, a gasp, and a contraction of the chest.—"Therefore," he continued, "I thought it more kind to her—whom I wouldn't pain by a word—to come a little way home with you to-night, and ask you all about it."

"Ask me!" repeated Teddy. "Oh! I know nothing, sir. It's beyond me to give any information?"

"Oh! no, it isn't," said Mr. Ubbs. "Am I walking too fast for you?"

Teddy, who had been accommodating his pace to the short steps of Mr. Ubbs, who took about twenty steps to the yard, and those on tiptoe, answered "No!" very decisively.

"I thought that you slackened your pace."

"I pulled up short, that's all."

"I beg your pardon, Fernwell," said Mr. Ubbs; "it was my mistake, no doubt. Now, you can give me information, because you are there every day; you see Miss Wynn and her father very fre-

quently, and I am sure you can tell me if she ever —ever—ever mentions my name to her father, or is thoughtful when it is mentioned, or even if—if there's anybody else who calls sometimes, and for whom she may have a little liking?"

"I think you should ask all these questions of Mr. Wynn himself," said Teddy, bluntly.

"I have—twenty times. I have his consent—he's a dear, good fellow——"

"Ay! he is!" interrupted Teddy.

"And I have asked him, but he only laughs at me, and calls me highly susceptible, and dreadful names like that, and refers me to Christie. But, Mr. Fernwell, I don't want to shock Christie before I am certain of the state of her affections. Fancy," he said, breaking out into a cold perspiration at the thought, "being told that you can't be loved, and that there isn't a thought of loving you anywhere. My goodness!"

"I cannot help you, Mr. Ubbs—I wish that I could," said Teddy, thus appealed to. "I am the last man in the world to know the thoughts of Martin Wynn's daughter. No one calls that I am aware of; she speaks of you, now and then—there, that's all the information I can give you."

"Thank you," said Mr. Ubbs again; "but when she speaks of me—does she change colour at all?"

"Not a bit," answered Teddy.

"Ah! I thought not," said Mr. Ubbs with a sigh, "it was not to be expected. But she speaks of me occasionally, though?"

"Yes."

"What—what does she say about me, now? That I'm too quiet, or anything of that kind? I knew a man who told me, to my face, that I was a milk-and-water creature. She doesn't make any fun of me, I hope? Girls will, you know, sometimes."

"She says how good you are to the poor, and how interested in them."

"She likes me for that? I'll go down Drag's Court to-morrow."

Teddy winced, but recovered himself at once.

"Yes, she likes you for that, at least, sir. Pardon me, but we all respect you very much for that."

"It is man's duty surely," said Mr. Ubbs; "we are told not to forget the poor."

"And the poor have need of help, lest they should run away into temptation in very despair.

I wish I could become suddenly rich," said Teddy.

"You would help them too?"

"I would help them in the right way—for I know all about them, sir—what they keep back in their pride—the honest ones. But—I came from the very lowest, as you know, sir."

"My dear Fernwell, I don't know," said Mr. Ubbs. "Mr. Wynn has only told me of your business qualities, your cleverness at your work, and your industry. What you have been, doesn't matter much."

"Yes, it does."

"What you are—we all know and respect."

It was Teddy's turn to thank Mr. Ubbs, who, after that, darted back to the old subject.

"Then you know nothing more about Miss Wynn?" he said. "I'm very sorry. I had the idea to-day that you would enlighten me a great deal."

"You do not want any enlightenment, sir," said Teddy.

"What would you do in my place?"

"Why, speak out, to be sure," said Teddy. "She's frank, her father is frank, and they both like frankness in others. It's as well to know the

best or worst at once, and I think the best is waiting for you."

"Do you, really!" cried Mr. Ubbs; "ah! I'm not sure of that. I wish I were, Fernwell. Everybody tells me that I'm sure, for I make no secret of my intentions."

"I would not run about telling everybody, sir."

"Why not? I'm proud——"

"Yes, you've said so. But Miss Wynn may not be proud of her name in everybody's mouth—and everybody opens it widely enough, even at chapel."

"Perhaps you're right," said Mr. Ubbs reflectively; "but I dislike any disguise. I will speak to Miss Wynn directly I can. You give me quite new hope, Fernwell. I shall be always grateful to you."

Teddy intimated that his assistance was not worth the thanks bestowed upon it.

"You'll wish me success, Fernwell, I'm sure."

Teddy was silent, to Mr. Ubbs' surprise.

"I said—that you'll wish me success?"

"Yes," said Teddy with a suddenness and energy that rather scared his companion, "I wish you success. She can't do better—she may be too

good for you in some respects," he added, not too complimentary, "but she would be happy with you. She's not a vain woman, and she knows her duty—no one better. The best of daughters will always make the best of wives. I wish you success, sir, with all my heart—I am sure that you deserve it—I am sure that you would strive very hard for her happiness in every way. What better luck can I wish Christie Wynn than that?"

He shook hands with Mr. Ubbs at the corner of Wellington Street, and parted with him abruptly. Mr. Ubbs had intended to cross Waterloo Bridge with him, but the suddenness of the movement had thrown him off his guard. He wished Teddy good night, and saved his halfpenny.

Teddy proceeded on his way, deep in thought. At the foot of the bridge a woman on crutches, from the dusky by-path of Lancaster Place, limped eagerly towards him—a woman ragged and forlorn, with her bonnet trailing off her head, and her shoes flapping on the pavement, in true slipshod beggarly fashion.

"Oh! sir, six children all down in it at once, and my husband out of work, and no bread to eat for four-and-twenty hours."

"Yes—I know," said Teddy absently.

He knew all about that cry; in the ring of the voice he detected the true professional whine. The woman did not understand his reply, and went on with her complaint—

"They're all at Lambeth, sir, and I haven't a ha'penny to cross the bridge with. Will yer give a poor cripple a ha'penny to cross the bridge?"

Teddy gave the halfpenny as requested, absently enough still, and then paid for his own entrance on the Bridge of Sighs. He added his sighs to the regrets that had gone before there—standing in the recess for a while, finally kneeling on the stone seat and looking down into the water. A dark night, a murky close night for May; a night when a man might feel lonesome watching the sluggish tide stealing on under the arches. He had spent a happy evening, he had told Christie; but the happiness had vanished in that hour, or something had risen to his mind to disturb him after the genial presence of the Wynns had been withdrawn.

He seemed to have a great deal to consider; he pushed his hat from his forehead to the back of his head, and looked none the wiser for

the alteration; he clutched his chin with his hands as he knelt there, and stared straight across the river at the wharves on the Surrey side, where Henwood's warehouse, gaunt and stolid, reared its five stories in the distance. But he was not thinking of the Henwoods or of the watchman at the wharf at that time, but of himself,—which was a bit of a novelty,—of his own future, and the hopes born with it. What he was working for, or whither those hopes might lead him, could not be guessed from the grave, almost stern expression of his face then; in the faint light of the gas-lamp near him, it was a fine, thoughtful countenance, and all its imperfections were subdued by the night.

He was still thinking, idling or watching, when the beggar woman stumped into the recess of the bridge, and began a fresh complaint.

"For the love of Hiven, sir, a penny for a loaf of bread. Walked from Liverpool—doing it by twenty miles a day on these ere crutches—to see a sister in the horspital, and dead as a nit, sir, when I got there."

"Lucky sister," said Teddy, turning suddenly upon the woman, "to be quit of this world, if it was like yours in any way."

"On'y a penny, sir——"

"To help you back to Liverpool—eh?"

"It won't go far, but I'll be werry thankful."

"Thankful to desert—to give the go-by," he corrected, "to all the kinchins lying on the flats of their backs in Lambeth. Why, mother, if you don't try a better lay than this, and do it better, the game won't pay!"

Teddy, drifting back into his old slang, turned to the woman suddenly and quickly.

"Oh! I didn't know yer."

"Know me for a pal—perhaps not. Do you know me for a friend, years and years ago?"

"Eh?—who is it?. I'm not as cute as I used to be—I never knowed yer."

He brought his face still closer to her.

"Teddy," he said in a low voice.

"No!—never!—is it? What, Teddy Fernwell, the boy I nussed?—why, save us! what a man yer are, and with a black coat and hat, too, like a lord. Well, I wished yer luck, and, s'help me, but I'm glad to see it. This aint like the old times, boy."

"No—they have gone back—I don't belong to them," said Teddy; "you are," with a shud-

der, "just the same. Can't you do better?"

"Lor'—I likes it! It comes easy enuf, Teddy—and it hurts no one."

Teddy sat down beside the beggar woman.

"What has become of all of *them?*"

He ran over several names hurriedly. Dead, transported, gone away, and left no address—all gone!

"And Fernwell—my father?" asked Teddy, "his time is up—has he been seen?"

"I aint seen him, and don't want to. But tell us about yerself—it's as good as a play to meet the likes of yer," and she clapped her hand familiarly on Teddy's shoulder.

Teddy shrank; regretted, perhaps, that he had been rash enough to claim past relationship with this woman. He had been more thoughtless than his wont, and it was an act of recklessness to conjure back even this grisly spectre from his past. The woman detected the spasm of regret—possibly of disgust.

"Oh! the likes on us!—oh! the sight of grandeur that Teddy's tooked up, and that turns him agin the woman that was like a mother to him!"

"Yes, yes, you were a mother in your way, at

that time," said Teddy, as he rose to his feet; "I should have died, red-handed, if it hadn't been for your care—and I was nothing to you then. I am not better than yourself, for I am an impostor!"

"Eh?"

"Here, let me shake you by the hand—you are one of the old friends, woman—the only one I had once. Are you poor?"

"Holy wars!—Teddy asks if I'm poor!"

"Can't you get anywhere out of the streets?—into the Union——"

"Who?—I?—the Union! Why, Teddy, there's the prison afore the House—that's where I shall settle, s'help——"

"No—no—think it over. You are an old woman—the end of your journey, with the Judge waiting—here is money—it may help you—get away, get away—God help you, woman, in His time!"

He pushed money into her hands, and strode away from her. A large sum for him to bestow—a sum that he had taken with him to purchase a birthday present for Christie Wynn, and then changed his mind, *en route*—five sovereigns and some silver, that the old woman clutched with

greedy hands, and gasped over like a madwoman, blessing Teddy between her spasms of exultation, and calling Heaven to witness how she had always said that that boy would turn out "the best and primest."

Meanwhile, the best and primest strode on to Upper Ground Street at a fierce rate of progression, as though he would outwalk the past, and the shadow of it which he had always feared, and which had fallen very densely upon his path that night.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRISTIE PROMISES TO TRY.

AFTER the guests had departed, a little dialogue ensued between father and daughter. Whilst Teddy and the beggar woman were speaking of the past, Martin Wynn and Christie sat down side by side to dwell upon the future.

Christie knew what was coming, and though her heart beat more rapidly, she did not shrink from the subject, but faced it like a brave little woman. The love between these two was a something very pure and intense, verging almost upon the "sentimental," against which both had protested a little while ago.

"Twenty years of age," Christie, taking her hand in his hard, horny one, "twenty years you and I together, without a quarrel—almost without a difference of opinion. I hope that I have been thankful enough."

"I hope that I have for my dear, large-hearted, wise-headed dad."

"Wise-headed!" said Martin with a laugh; "ah! very wise, to be sure—we'll have no flattery, Chris, at this time of night. But we'll have a little sober talk, you and I together, about Mr. Ubbs."

"Oh! dear—that is a subject that will keep till I am one-and-twenty—till I am of age, father."

"Ah! then you will be your own mistress and defy me, Chris. Now I have you—and I am really going to talk very seriously about this young man."

"And you require my serious attention?"

"To be sure."

"Then I'll compose myself, although he's such a funny man, with such a funny name tacked to him, that it makes me laugh to think of it."

Poor Mr. Ubbs! if the west wind could have wafted to him these words of Christie Wynn, he might have been less sanguine of the sunshine.

Martin's face expressed a shade more gravity after this.

"The sublime and the ridiculous verging on each other in real earnest, then," said Martin, "for in some things that man almost attains sub-

limity. I like a hearty laugh—it's a good thing, Chris—but I can't laugh at a good man."

"Don't look so grave, father—I will not laugh any more. He *is* a good man—I own that. When you look like that, I sometimes fancy what a hard, stern man you might be—almost unforgiving."

"Your mother made me less stern and hard, Christie," said Martin, his features softening. "But we will keep to one subject, please, and I will not say many words concerning it. I told you, a few months ago, all that had passed between Mr. Ubbs and me?"

"Yes."

"I asked you, Chris, to think seriously of this gentleman. I did not dwell upon his worldly advantages—though we have no occasion to despise them, for we are not likely to be rich people, or increase by many hundreds the little sum we have put by—but I discoursed seriously even then upon Mr. Ubbs' merits, his real goodness of heart, purity of thought, earnestness, and—godliness. That man I should really like you to marry, Chris."

Chris bent her head lower, and twined her fingers together in her lap. She assented to all the merits of

the meek man who had been present that evening at her birthday feast; in her own way she admired him; in her own circle she had heard many anecdotes to his credit, but he was not the hero of her dreams,—demure, dissenting maiden, with a soul above sentiment and romance, as she was.

"I do not suppose, Chris, that you have thought of any one else. You are too young, and, moreover—you would have told me."

"If I loved any one else?—yes—or if any one else loved me? Oh! yes, I think I should."

"Think!" said the amazed parent.

"I am sure—for I would not deceive you, or keep back any thoughts in which you could not share—except that they were the wild, foolish, unaccountable, absurd thoughts which we women have at times, and which would only tease you to relate. But, father," she said, "why are you in so great a hurry to find me a home of my own?"

"I would keep you with me all my life if I had only myself to study," was the reply; "I had a hope that no one would come after you until I was fifty or sixty years of age, and that you might be spared me all that time,—but it was a foolish idea."

"No," said Christie eagerly, "it was not—let it remain with you, and let us keep together all our lives, growing old together like grandfather and Aunt Polly. I often think of those two lives, flowing on peacefully and happily, and wish no greater happiness than that for you and me."

"I see the chance you lose now," said Martin, "and I will not be a selfish father, at your expense. If my Christie ever marries, I used to say, she shall have for a husband, an upright, honourable, religious man, without a blot in his past to look back upon, or a fear for his future that may daunt her. The best man for the best girl of my acquaintance; or I will play the tyrant, and keep her from wedlock all her life. I thought that man would come some day—not in the early days like these—and coming here, I take his part, and welcome him, knowing what is best for Christie Wynn."

"But he is in a great hurry, I fancy."

"Only in a hurry to know whether he is sure of you, and may call you his wife some day. Knowing that, he will be content to wait your pleasure, and I for one shan't hurry you to the altar."

"Would he wait ten years for me?"

Martin could not refrain from a long shrill whistle at this.

"How fond you must be of him!" he exclaimed.

"You would not have me marry him until I was *quite* sure that I loved him?"

"I feel quite sure that that man is to be loved by any girl who sets her mind to it."

This father, with his feelings growing rusty from inaction, was as obtuse as most fathers on the subject of his daughter's affections; handsome looks, graceful deportment, skill, courage and eloquence, were not taken into account with the suitor. Martin had ignored the money part of the question, he thought, and looked only to his daughter's happiness; but it had had its weight for all that, as money will have with people of forty years and upwards. What would become of Christie, troubled him not a little, young father as he was still; he had been morbidly sensitive concerning her future protector—when she was twelve years of age, even, who was to marry her had been a subject for grave speculation.

"Well, I will try and love him—try my hardest," she said suddenly.

"That's right. And when he asks you—perhaps you'll tell him so."

"Yes," promised Christie.

But Christie did not know what she was promising—did not know her real thoughts, or would not believe that there were any real thoughts to scare her. Hers had been a quiet life—a smooth sea, and a prosperous voyage thereon—for she had loved her father, dutifully obeyed him, and known no troubles. She had an illimitable faith in Martin Wynn, and in what he thought best for her; and even now, with a strange yearning to rebel that seemed sinful, and with a strange objection to the suitor proposed that seemed unnatural, she wondered why she did not feel more grateful for all the father's interest in her welfare.

CHAPTER IX.

ZACH IN HARNESS.

ZACH FERNWELL, better known in his new world as Mr. Zachary Henwood, had settled down fairly to business, after his return from the Continent. His tutors set aside, his commercial life began, and it can be said to his credit that Zach began in earnest.

Travelling on the Continent is not the best means of training the commercial mind, or developing the City brain; but Zach had had a fine worldly, money-loving tutor to accompany him, and there were many lessons taught and inculcated on the journey that were profitable, in a worldly sense, to the pupil.

"Teach him the value of money," had been the one injunction of Mrs. Henwood, "and half the virtues under heaven will follow the teaching."

It had been Mrs. Henwood's father's creed, the

father of that father before him; it was doubtful if Mrs. Henwood herself treated money with proper respect, she was too lavish, it was whispered occasionally—but at least Mrs. Henwood wasted but little money on other people, and wished Zach to be more careful than herself.

"You will have your bread to earn, Zachary," she said to him one day; "I do not intend to keep you in idleness, or leave you one farthing of my money. I shall place you in a good position—find you a post in my warehouses, where you will be paid according to your industry and vigilance—and then have done with you. After that, it will be your own fault if you cannot work your own way; I shall have fulfilled my duty by you."

"And you may rely upon me always doing my duty by you, Mrs. Henwood—and in endeavouring to deserve your esteem and affection."

"I don't want any affection," she said languidly; "I don't expect any. It will please me to see you advancing in life—that's all that I can say. If you behave yourself, I shall ask you to dinner, now and then."

So Zachary, thankful for these favours, not too graciously accorded, left the house at Wimbledon,

took furnished apartments near his business quarters, and went at business like a lion.

Zach went to the City wharf on the other side of the river, preferring that post to the Upper Ground Street premises, and calling at the latter as seldom as possible. In the City warehouse, in the counting-house where the clerks were, rattling about the City, full of life and energy and intellect, Zach soon became a man to wonder at. He was born for business pursuits, it was certain; he knew the value of money, and the hard bargains to be driven with cash in hand; he worked as though his soul was in his mistress's cause. The clerks wondered why he strove so hard, so desperately hard at times; he had been placed above them—but beneath Mr. Tinchester, still the ruling agent of the great wharves—and he worked them hard also, knowing no mercy. He was not a tolerant young man; in his business hours there was nothing youthful in him; his sharp eyes let nothing escape him in his field of action, and he would allow no ease in his presence, taking no ease unto himself. Still he was not a cruel taskmaster; he seemed only to require that justice should be done to Mrs. Henwood's work by those in Mrs. Hen-

wood's service; and there were occasions when he spoke kindly to the servants, though it might be with a pen in his mouth and his brain full of far-away thoughts. He made no man his enemy; he constituted unintentionally many men his admirers, Mr. Tinchester amongst the number, who sang to his praises at Wimbledon when Zachary Fernwell was not there. Zach worked with a will, then; in the early days he had evinced an intense anxiety to master the business; mastering it completely before two months had passed over his head, and then setting to work to master the humankind connected with it—the City merchants who landed and bonded with the firm, and borrowed money on their goods now and then—the clerks—the subordinates and insubordinates mixed up with the house of Henwood—and the bankers who took care of the floating capital, and were always very civil to Zach, seeing great things in the younger "Henwood," and a propensity in him to rise.

Zach became still paler over his work; thinner and paler too, as though his intense application to business were trying to his system; but he never flinched; he worked right on like a slave under the lash—under the lash that Mrs. Henwood had

held over his head. In his life he had given some signs of weakness, even vacillation; but it was not apparent here. He had mapped out his course, and there were no faltering steps, moral or physical, in the city life he had entered upon—it was a resolute, even a fierce face that was turned to the money-hunters round him.

He was first at business in the morning; the clerks found him there, poring over the books; and the junior clerk, retiring to his suburban lodgings, after clearing up the office litter left by greater men than he, putting all the books in their places, trying the drawers, and turning out the gas in the counting-house, left, as a rule, the slight figure of the junior manager bending over his papers in the full glare of the Argand in the private office.

"I think he will work himself to death," he ventured to say once to a fellow-clerk. "I never saw such a man to keep the steam up in my life! And he isn't older than I am, I know."

Zach was the last to leave, then—even then not to leave for home.

"He does keep orful hours, to be sure," his landlady, Mrs. Evvers, also curious about him,

observed. "Coming in at all times of the night, raking and racketing about, like the cats."

But he was not up at all times of the morning, for woe-betide the landlady who was five minutes behind with his seven o'clock breakfast. Sunday was chiefly his one day of rest—rest in the complete sense of the word, lying full length on the stuffy sofa, with his hands behind his head, looking up at the ceiling, like a man thoroughly tired out with the week's battle. The tutor of the past days had not inculcated church-going habits into this young man, or the young man had dropped them at once when free from tuition; for he let the church bells appeal to him in vain, as he lay there as quiet and almost as rigid as a dead man. Sunday after Sunday thus, rising for a five o'clock dinner, and then lying down again, unless asked to Wimbledon. After his Wimbledon Sunday, a succession of Sundays in the old fashion, until July weather and the full heat of summer was upon him.

In July the landlady's daughter, Arabella, a slightly-made, but pretty-faced girl, with a fine opinion of her figure, which she was trying very hard to cut in half with staylaces, ventured to

affirm to her mother that it was her opinion that Mr. Henwood was "a-dying by inches."

"Good gracious! and a lodger that pays so punctually, too, though a little too partickler about his keys."

"He's like a ghost—a handsome ghost—lying there of a Sunday on that sofa. Oh! I can't bear to look at him!"

Which was scarcely a fact, considering that she had looked a great deal at Zachary from the corners of her eyes, and been interested in his eccentric manners, and watchful at doors, and through key-holes, after the habits of her class. Zach had always spoken very kindly to her too, and she was, therefore, doubly interested in Zachary, having heard in some romance or other that landladies' daughters were the equal of their mothers' lodgers, and often struck up life-long matches, that turned out very happily. She was a girl with an honest desire to be married and settled in life—and no more nonsense with the chaps *afterwards*. And possibly her mother encouraged this laudable desire, for she was a woman with many troubles, and back in her rent.

At all events, that very Sunday evening, Mrs.

Evvers ventured upon a little talk with the lodger, and upon introducing Arabella's name into the discourse with considerable effect, after a random inquiry as to whether she should light the gas.

"Arabella do think, Mr. Henwood, that you're looking very ill—and Arabella's a cute girl as ever lived. Don't they give any holidays in the City?"

"I haven't asked for any," replied Zach, from his couch.

"I think if you took your holidays, and went to Gravesend, or Margate, where all the gentility goes in a rush about this time, it might set you up for the year. Arabella is inclined to think so too."

"Arabella is really very kind," said Zach; "but I can't afford the time, or the money."

"But you aint well—quite well, I think, sir."

"Oh! yes I am—and mean to keep well."

Mrs. Evvers thought this profane, and departed. Zach rose from the couch, and looked at himself in the glass, when the door had closed.

"I don't see any difference," he said. "Take my holidays, indeed!"

Arabella coming in with the supper-tray shortly afterwards, was inveigled into conversation.

"What have you been frightening your mother about, Arabella?" he asked.

He called her very seldom by her Christian name, but when he did so she objected not —on the contrary, blushed and smirked a little more, and simpered too demonstratively, poor girl!

"Well, you really are not looking well, Mr. Henwood," she said; "and I could not help taking the liberty of telling mother so."

"You're very kind to take all this interest in me —and I so lazy and ungrateful. I'll think of my holidays, and of how glad you'll be to get rid of me here."

"I didn't say that," was the quick answer.

"Perhaps you meant it?"

"No—and I didn't mean it," replied Arabella, still indignant, and anxious to confute the foul aspersion; "and you know better than that, and this is only your game."

"Only my game! Well, that's it. I'm glad you don't want to get rid of me, Arabella."

Arabella lingered, and arranged slowly the plates, the knives, forks, dishes, and remnants of Sunday's small joint; but Zachary said no more, and she retired at last to brood upon all that

he had said, and to tell her mother in the back parlour, like a good young woman, as she would have been, if she had not exaggerated all the details. Possibly she had contracted this loose habit from her mother, who was subject to exaggerations concerning the lodgers' tea and sugar being "out," the havoc that cats made with the ham, and the numbers of scuttlefuls that had been consumed in the winter's firing.

Zachary thought no more of the change in his looks for awhile; he was young and strong, and entering on life—surely he could work with a will, and with the best of them! It was imperative that he should set his shoulder to the wheel. Presently, however, Mr. Tinchester took him aside and asked if he felt quite well—if he would like any holidays. He was entitled to a fair share of holidays; business was going on pretty well, and the smart, fatherly gentleman offered to do extra duty till Zach came back, all the better for his change.

"I don't care about the country, thank you, Mr. Tinchester," he replied; "and as I never felt better in my life, I shall not take any holidays this year."

But he altered his mind after the receipt at his lodgings in the New Kent Road of a small epistle, on pink note-paper, sealed in a pink envelope with pink wax. Arabella looked daggers at that epistle, when she brought it in at Zach's late dinner.

"It's been here all day—it came by the morning post, after you had gone to business."

"Here all day, eh!" and Zach looked very attentively at the envelope, turning it over and over in his hands, and critically examining the seal.

"I s'pose you don't think, sir, that anybody's been trying to open it?" said Arabella; "or that any one's curious about your letters, or the *ladies* that send them?"

Arabella was certainly out of temper, and highly indiscreet, forgetting her place and the lodger's. But flying compliments—those trifles lighter than air, which condense themselves into leaden bullets, if one or another of the players consider them trifles no more—had been interchanged pretty freely during the last week, and in Zachary Fernwell's leisure hours. And when Arabella had begun to think that she had not set her cap, or taken in her stays another reef in vain, it *was* hard to have a pink glaced envelope arrive,

with Zachary Henwood, Esq., inscribed thereon, in a fine lady's unmistakable scrawl.

"No—I don't think that you would open my letters, Arabella," said Zach; "I have too much confidence in you to suspect such a thing."

"I hope you have."

Zachary broke the seal, and read attentively the contents of the letter. There was a great deal to say evidently, for the letter took time to peruse, and had to be held sideways, and diagonally, and then upside down, to fathom the intricacies of crossed lines. Whatever could a lady have to say to him at that length? thought Arabella, with a sinking heart—thought so deeply, too, that she dropped a plate upon the carpet, splitting it in half. Zach looked up.

"I shall not want you any more, Arabella," he said; "everything will do very nicely, thank you."

"It's—it's no bad news, Mr. Henwood?" she blurted forth—"I hope it's no bad news?"

"It's not of any consequence." Zach tore the pink note into fragments as he spoke, and Arabella's spirits went up twenty-five degrees. That morning Zachary took Mr. Tinchester aside.

"I am not feeling well, sir; I find that I have

really been working too hard, and I think that I will take your advice about a change."

"It's necessary for everybody, my dear Zachary," said Mr. Tinchester; "you are right enough. Take a month to begin with—we're rather slack at present."

"We'll say a month; but if I feel better, I shall return to my post at once."

"Where shall you go?"

"To Margate, probably—I want a bracing air. Good-bye, sir."

"Good-bye, Zachary. A pleasant holiday—I need not ask *you* to take care of yourself."

"I will do my best to keep out of mischief," said Zach, with a smile.

Zachary went home to pack his portmanteau, to busy himself with a few minor arrangements before he apprised his landlady that he started for Yarmouth on the following morning, before anyone was up in the house.

"Hadn't we better get you a bit of breakfast, Mr. Henwood," she said, "afore you go?"

"It's an early train—half-past five from the Shoreditch Station, Mrs. Evvers; I must get something down the line."

"Oh! that is early," said the landlady, who objected to early rising on principle.

But at four in the morning, breakfast was ready for Zachary in his drawing-room, and Arabella Evvers, somewhat pale and red-eyed, was waiting for him. Zachary, entering his room, was surprised and pleased at this attention.

"Why, this is very kind of you," he said.

"As if I was a-going to let you leave us for a month without a mite of anything to eat inside you!" said Arabella; "there's the tea, and here's a rump-steak that I got over night, Mr. Zachary."

She had not ventured on that Christian name before, even with a formal prefix to it, but she thought that the attention bestowed upon him deserved the privilege; and, besides, he was going away for four long weeks!

Zachary thanked her, and proceeded with his breakfast, giving Arabella several directions, meanwhile, as Arabella lingered in the room, under pretence of dusting tables and chairs, and arranging window-blinds.

"Send all my letters, Arabella, to Post Office, Great Yarmouth, there's a good girl," said Zach.

"Pink letters, and all?" added Arabella, archly.

"Everything, even to the circulars from that dentist round the corner, who thinks that New Kent Road requires its teeth stopped once a week with his patent flexible enamel—that charming dentist with the big whiskers, Arabella."

"I'm sure I don't know anything of the dentist," said Arabella, tossing her head, "or of his whiskers either."

"Ah! it's all very well to tell *me* that."

"If he chooses to stare in at our parlour windows every time he passes, *I* can't help it," said Arabella, anxious to impress Zach with the fact that the dentist *was* interested, at least, in somebody at that house.

"No more can he, poor fellow."

Arabella blushed vividly—even indulged in a feeble little giggle, despite the lowness of her spirits that morning. They were lower still when he rose to depart, and caught up his portmanteau by the handle.

"That's very heavy, Mr. Zachary," she said, looking at his burden; "it seems as if you were going away for good."

"We'll not think of anything so horrible."

"And here's the cab that you ordered last night," she said; "oh! dear, it is like going away in earnest now."

"You advised me to go, mind."

"No, I didn't—it was mother."

"Well, good-bye, Arabella—take care of my rooms till I come back again, and don't let that big-whiskered fellow who deals in teeth cut another fellow out without due notice."

"Go—od-bye, sir."

Arabella put her hand in his, and looked down with eyes full of foolish tears; she did not want him to see them if she could help it, she thought at one moment, and then she fancied the next that they would look nice if he did.

"Good-bye, then. Going away for a month, Arabella—perhaps to be smashed up going along!"

"Oh! good Lord, sir, don't talk like that!"

"Going away for—a whole—month," he said, very slowly and decisively, drawing her towards him, and advancing his face to hers until their lips met. "There—don't tell the dentist!"

He strode away like a conquering hero after that; in the cab that bore him to the station he

sang a French song that he had learned on the Continent, an instance of high spirits very unusual in Zach Fernwell; but in the third-class carriage —he was economical, and saved money when he could, and when appearances would not tell in his disfavour—his face settled itself into its old expression, cold, resolute, even defiant.

He thought no more of Arabella—full of tears at home, and yet happy in her tears, thinking of what had happened, and what might happen in the days to come, when he returned with his heart all the fonder for his absence from her. She went into her bed-room, all in a flutter, to look at a lock of his hair that she kept in a secret drawer amongst a packet of old love-letters, half-a-dozen pomatum-pots, two bottles of scent, several pairs of soiled kid gloves, some old curl papers, and a screw of rouge. A locket of hair that Zachary had never given her, but which was the result of collections—two or three hairs at a time from his brush on the dressing-table, and five or six hairs latterly, it being moulting time with her hero. A tolerable lock of hair now, carefully tied with blue ribbon, and looking romantic and impressive enough. Here, like a maiden love-sick and for-

lorn, sat Arabella with her prize, until the parlour lodger, an old gentleman with the gout, scuffled downstairs at eight o'clock, slipping on the last flight into the tray that Arabella had left "for a moment" on the stairs, and swearing awfully in consequence.

Arabella told her mother the greater portion of the news that morning over breakfast, with a fair portion of Zach's rump-steak warmed up again for the occasion.

"He could hardly eat a bit after all," she said, "his heart was so full. And he—he said that the dentist wasn't to cut him out—as if that was likely, mother!"

"He shook hands, o' course?"

"Yes, he shook hands with me," said Arabella, blushing at the reminiscence. There are some incidents which maiden reserve shrinks from telling even the mother, and she was not quite certain what the mother would think of it all.

"I s'pose he never talks seriously to you, Bella?" asked Mrs. Evvers; "not as if he meant it?"

"There's many a truth spoken in jest, mother."

"Young lodgers air werry fond o' their larks," remarked the landlady; "but you're a gal that can

take care of herself, and properly demean herself. I aint afeard of *you* making yourself a fool about any lodger in the world."

"No—you needn't be," said Arabella proudly; "I respects them as respect me—I'll have a little bit of that corner fat, mother."

"He's a quiet sort of young man—well off, I daresay—that Chump sells a capital steak, Bella, though I don't see where the pound and a quarter is."

"Mr. Henwood ate some, of course."

"I thought he could hardly take a bit, you said," grumbled Mrs. Evvers; "why, he must have eaten like a horse!"

CHAPTER X.

ZACH OUT OF HARNESS.

BEFORE one in the afternoon of that day, Zachary Fernwell was in Yarmouth, and on Yarmouth sands. He had selected his hotel on the quay, an out-of-the-way place for a visitor not connected with the shipping interest. In possession of a fair salary—even of a very handsome salary for a young man of his age—it was his policy to adopt the economical, for reasons that will hereafter appear. It was his pleasure also, for he knew the value of money, and the power of money, as befitted a youth whose training had not been neglected.

He was on Yarmouth sands before one in the morning then, and the weather being fine and no wind stirring, the visitors had turned out *en masse* to enjoy the day, and make the most of their morning dresses. There they were, these

people, resting from the cares of fashion and business, and from cares not born of either, and so all the more difficult to escape, heaped on the deep sea sand by thousands, running over parade and piers and jetty; crowding round singers, players, organ-grinders, and performing monkies; bargaining for fossils and for the next turn in the bathing-machines; sailing forth in the yawls triumphantly, coming back in the yawls despondently, after the manners and customs of the English. Zachary stood with his hands behind him on the parade, watching this panorama, closely watching it as for a face, or faces that he expected there. Very quiet and observant was this keen-eyed man, letting but little escape him, noting every incident—and those attracted by it—that varied the scene on that bright morning at the end of July. He moved from his post of observation at last, and went on about fifty yards, to pause again, and survey the new phase of society presented by his change of ground. An excursion train from Norwich had arrived, and there was a stream of nondescripts, bearing baskets and babies *en avance*, coming down the opposite street towards the sea, whooping and gesticulating with delight,

as men and women from shop-counters and street corners are in the habit of doing.

Zach went on again, to pause again on the right of the Wellington Pier, and look at crowd number three, a smaller crowd, that evidently disliked noise, and had fled the brass-band and the sweetstuff man, who spent the days of his life bawling "Beautiful Rock," and the boys with the tarts, on which the sand was drifting, taking fifty per cent off the flavour, and adding a grittiness that set the teeth on edge. Here Zach's quest came to an end, for he backed suddenly and hastily, after holding up his walking-cane—a gold-headed cane, which had been Mrs. Henwood's present to him. This signal having been made, he crossed the road and waited patiently, with his back against the railings of that admirably-conducted institution, the New Assembly Rooms, in the grounds of which some pretty girls were playing croquet. Here he remained till a counter signal was made to him, which took him once more across the road, towards the Nelson column. On this new parade there were but few visitors; two old ladies, a nautical gentleman with a telescope, a sick lad progressing slowly in a bath-chair, and a tall young lady with

voluminous skirts, a pork-pie hat, and a white wing-feather. This young lady was evidently the object of his search, although he followed, and did not approach her until they were a considerable distance from the town, and the murmur of the crowd had been replaced by the hoarser murmur of the sea.

Then he approached to her side, and the lady held her hand towards him.

"You have come, then, Zach?"

"Yes; could I do less than come?—was not your note an invitation, Lettice?"

"Scarcely."

"I construed it so," he said; "and my inclination assisted me to put that interpretation on your missive. Is this a dangerous step?"

"I don't know—I hope not."

"It must be a singular coincidence," said Zachary, with a laugh; "*I* have been recommended the air of Yarmouth for a change. I really am not well, and my looks will not belie the advice that I have received."

Lettice looked anxiously towards him.

"Yes—you are ill."

"Only with suspense, excitement, the restraint

that is upon my lips, and keeps me plotting and scheming for a happiness that should come to me more naturally."

"Hush!—don't speak so loud! We are not quite alone here."

They went on silently together for a hundred yards or more, then Lettice Henwood stopped.

"If we strike across here towards the race-course, we can talk quietly enough. I have a great deal to tell you," she said.

They left the parade and went across a sandy patch of grass—grass struggling with sea sand for its life. Here, where the land dipped, they set their backs to the slope, and composed themselves for a *tête-à-tête*.

"I must not stay too long away," she said. "I have promised to be home at two to luncheon. I am supposed to be shopping in King Street by this time."

Zachary laughed, but Lettice Henwood's lips were only compressed more firmly, until she passionately exclaimed, "Oh, Zach, I hate this slyness—this constant and everlasting deceit—these strings of lies that I have to tell—playing the traitress to a woman who, with all her faults, may love me!"

"If she loved you like a true mother she would study your happiness more," said Zach.

"She thinks that she is studying it by striving for a good husband for me," replied Lettice—"by telling me that I am too much of a novel reader, and too much of a student, to know what is best for myself."

"Does she suspect?"

"No. Suspicious as she is, you, at least, are not supposed to be an object of attention worthy Mrs. Henwood's daughter."

"My poor estate shields me, cousin," he said mournfully; "and yet she should have suspected me first of all. Thrown into your society constantly, related to you, seeing you at your best, and learning to love you with my whole soul, why could she not guess all?"

"You concealed your passion well," replied Lettice.

"I wish that I had the courage to tell her."

"She would expel you from the house—from a share in her patronage. Zach, she would sink you!"

"And if we were married? What is to prevent you and I walking into a church one morning,

and quietly taking each other for better—for worse?"

"Would you risk poverty for me?"

"Everything."

She shuddered.

"I could not bear poverty," she said. "I am fond of riches, like my mother, and display suits me. Zach, we need not bear poverty."

"No—she would forgive us?"

"She might, though she is very strange and stubborn, like her child."

"You stubborn!"

"Zach, it is all her fault," said the girl, whom we see now for the first time shorn of that languor and passiveness that deceived even her mother. "If I had had an affectionate parent, it would have been so different. Brought up to love the world and live for it—to act before it, as people on the stage act before an audience—to become fashionable and heartless—cold and calculating—to be turned over to the care of hirelings, and never to know what a gentle, loving mother was like—my God! to find as I grew up that there was little love for me—was it not natural that I should rebel?"

"When you found that I could love you, and share poverty with you, Lettice," added Zach, "then your better nature broke through the training that was reducing you to an automaton. But —I think that if we married, she would forgive us."

"Patience," said Lettice. "I will not marry yet, though I fear my future no more."

"Having confidence in me, why should you?"

"Having confidence also in myself," she added; "and feeling strong enough to hold my ground against the fools and idiots whom she would have me marry."

"No one need know of our marriage for awhile. The business is at my finger-ends already—I have mastered its intricacies, and almost see my way to a future independent of her, if she should cast us off. But, Lettice," he said more gently, "mothers only cast off their daughters in novels, and she is not very stern or very firm."

"It is her variable nature of which I am most afraid, Zach—but I have strength to meet her and to foil her, if she oppose us."

"You wish me to ask her openly?"

"It is more honest—it is right."

"I have not the courage," Zach confessed; "I cannot risk so much yet."

"You have not done well to venture here, then," she said sadly.

"I have no great fear of detection—and I came here with a hope to induce you to think more seriously, dear Lettice, of a secret marriage. Were we married, I could risk all, trusting in her mother's feelings."

"You are only twenty-one, and may change your mind! I am too tall for you, Zach—so awkward, and bony, too," she added, with a *naiveté* that told how charming she could be if she tried.

"You are all that is dear and precious to me," cried Zachary.

"Well, then, I am worth waiting for!"

She added this rather proudly, for she was a proud, though not a vain woman. She did not inherit her mother's love of self—scarcely, perhaps, her dead father's self-respect. But she was proud of her accomplishments—and not vain of her face. Years had not improved her looks; she was aware of that fact, and it had given her a morbid fear of being sought for her money, and then treated like a slave, after her money was secured.

She had read much, and studied many things; she wrote a little, and found that the editor's compliments were not always followed by his "regrets to inform her!"

Lettice was a hard, intelligent woman, whose affections had been warped in her youth by a mother who did not waste much time over her, or even care to see her too often, till she had grown up less tiresome. Lettice had been thrown on herself and spoiled; a cold, repellent, unimpressionable woman everybody thought her, when she was most romantic and most foolish. She was only a woman, after all, yearning for true affection, and despising the falsity that was presented to her as true—seeing through it by her own strong perceptive faculties, she thought, when, after all, it was only the extra shallowness of a poor performer. She was young enough to be touched by Zach Fernwell's passion for her, and to believe in it, knowing what he risked by discovery, and thinking not at all of what he might gain. She parted with Zach after a few arrangements for his future steps—after a little more of that scheming against which she had protested, but which tinged with bright colours—bright and false as such colours always

are—the life she was pursuing. The next day, on the sands, Zachary Fernwell advanced towards Mrs. Henwood and daughter, seated, under a shady silk umbrella, on the chairs that were for hire there. He had advanced close to them, before Mrs. Henwood looked up.

"My dear aunt—Miss Lettice, is it possible?—this is a pleasure entirely unexpected!"

Zachary, the reader perceives, had been versed in the art of lying with easy grace and natural effect, and we all know a few fashionable friends, who excel in this accomplishment, though they excel not in anything else.

"You—you here!" said Mrs. Henwood, expressing more surprise than gratification at her nephew's advent; "has anything happened at the wharves?"

"No, madam. Everything, I am happy to say, is progressing as satisfactorily and profitably as ever."

"Is this the extraordinary energy that Mr. Tinchester brags about? Young men ought not to think of idling their time away at watering-places."

"I told Mr. Tinchester so," replied Zachary; "I offered to give up my holidays this year; but he

was kind enough to take an interest in my health, and to express a fear that I was working far too hard."

Mrs. Henwood looked more attentively at him —even began to move a little uneasily on her chair.

"You haven't been ill?—you haven't been laid up with anything contagious?"

"Oh! no—I have felt a little mastered by overwork, that's all."

"Well, you might look better, certainly," said Mrs. Henwood, "but you need not have come to Yarmouth, where I wanted peace and quietness—absence from the least excitement, after the worry of the season."

Mrs. Henwood had been dancing her hardest only two nights since, at the Assembly Rooms, on the special occasion of a ball to some officers of a man-of-war in the Roads; but she had forgotten that little variation to the peace and quietness of which she was in search.

"I was recommended a bracing air," said Zachary in reply, "and you did not write to me concerning your intention to honour Yarmouth with your presence. I thought you were above Yarmouth, in

fact, and that it suited people of my station better."

"Yarmouth is a healthy place, or I should not be here. Why they put the healthy places in such nasty flat parts of the coast, I can't make out—it's very absurd! Not that it is a common place—Zachary," she hastened to inform him, "only on excursion days. We have some very nice people here, and the resident families are worthy of our patronage."

Mrs. Henwood evidently thought that that was saying a great deal. Zachary continued to improve the occasion; he led his aunt into a variety of topics of conversation, taking but little notice of Lettice sitting by her side; he spoke of feeling better already for the change, and of starting to business again in a few days, if the improvement continued—he did not care to idle time away at his age. He spoke of the marvellous change that Yarmouth air had already effected on his aunt; he had seen, a month or two ago, that she was languid, and "not like herself," and he could scarcely believe that it was the same woman—rather a cousin of hers—Lettice's elder sister, let him say.

All this pitiable, for us standing aloof, to witness; we can deplore the moral decadence of this man, even in the high estate to which he had been raised. Pitiable on all sides this scheming, this flattery, this chronic vanity of a woman three-and-forty years of age; pitiable, even, for its naturalness—for the world these three lived in was false and garish, and false things were indigenous to the soil. In Mrs. Henwood's world there was no religion, no care for truth, no care for anything but position and appearances; the little good in each denizen struggled very hard to exist amongst the rank luxuriance that flourished there.

Mrs. Henwood succumbed to the flattery of her nephew, for he was clever in his flattery, and deceptive in his studied frankness; and Mrs. Henwood was a woman not hard to deceive at any time, having faith in the praises of others. Zachary was asked to dine with them that evening at five—a friend or two, whom they had met, or made at Yarmouth, would meet him at that hour, and she should have great pleasure in introducing her sub-manager, she said. She spoke loftily and unnaturally, but she had the art of keeping

CHAPTER XI.

MORE FRIENDS AT YARMOUTH.

ZACHARY FERNWELL dined with his aunt, improving the occasion once more. To Mrs. Henwood he was invariably deferential, even diffident, showing quietly that he understood the difference of position between them, and that even their relationship could not bridge it over. This manner satisfied Mrs. Henwood, and threw her off her guard; she had confidence in Zach and her daughter, and though there were occasions when upon principle she was watchful of them both, still as a rule the maternal vigilance was not exercised to the prejudice or discomfort of the lovers.

Zachary had been a week in Yarmouth without his aunt calling attention again to his stay there, albeit he had improved in health, with the broad sea before him, and business off his mind. It was fine weather at Yarmouth still, fresh, cool weather,

that brought the baked out Londoners, and the inland gentlefolk, to the Norfolk coast, running up the price of lodgings, and gladdening the souls of the cormorants who let them. The demand exceeded the supply; and Lowestoft, the sister town, though doing well, and considering itself far more genteel, grew jealous of the harvest that they were gathering on the lower ground.

There came to Yarmouth with the rest, Martin Wynn and his daughter. Martin Wynn had fancied that Christie was not quite so bright and well as she used to be; and though Christie protested that she was, and thought that she was, Martin had resolved upon a week's change; and with only an hour's notice, had left Teddy in charge of his home, and started with his daughter for Norfolk. Being a prudent man, he was disgusted with the prices asked for the few apartments left in back streets; but he closed his bad bargain on the instant—making the best of it, as it was his nature to do—and then marched his daughter at once to the sands, to find an appetite for dinner, if possible.

"I'll have my money's worth out of this place, at any rate," he said, with a decisiveness of

expression that excited a merry laugh from Christie, for he had brightened himself up especially to make this a pleasant holiday for her. He fancied sometimes that he had not studied her sufficiently, and that she had become a little dull in consequence; therefore this doting father was going to use his best exertions, to shake every particle of sadness from her mind. A very handsome man was Martin Wynn still, and as his portly figure and bright face appeared upon the sands, the visitors looked at him, as well as at his daughter. Martin Wynn dressed well, if not in style, now—dressed substantially, with an eye to wear and tear; and Christie was always pretty and graceful enough. On the sands that morning they were set down for a Norfolk farmer and his daughter, well-to-do folk, who had come to dissipate at the seaside the fatigues of past harvesting.

"We'll have this all to ourselves, Christie," said Wynn, forgetting the folly of man disposing; "shutting the doors in the faces of intruders. You and I, as we used to be, when Stanley and Burns sent us flying to Paris in the old days."

"Why, we haven't been together—away from everybody—for a long time now," said Christie.

"What a holiday it will be!"

"I told Ubbs that we did not even want *him*," said Martin; "and he said that he did not think that he had a right to come, because——"

"Because I had not made up my mind to have him yet," concluded Christie. "Father, is this fair? Haven't we promised each other to think of nothing but the present here?"

"Ah! exactly," answered Martin. "I beg your pardon, girl—I stand corrected. I'll pay the penalty of an oyster supper, after our promenade in the evening, with the bigwigs on the pier. Only the present, and everybody belonging to the past shut out for seven days."

"Why, who would have thought of seeing you here, Mr. Wynn!"

"Confound!—what, Mrs. Henwood!" said Martin. "Oh! good morning, madam."

Mrs. Henwood, attended by her maid, was seated in her usual position on the sands, and had tapped Martin on the shoulder with her parasol, as he passed her. Martin stopped, with his daughter on his arm, and looked his discomfiture too evidently.

"Well, are you not delighted to see the friend,

and the *patroness*, again?" she asked, half in jest, and half with acerbity.

"I am really very much surprised," replied Martin. "I—I hope that you are well?"

"Quite well, thank you," said Mrs. Henwood. "Your daughter, I presume?"

"My daughter—coming down for the benefit of her health, Mrs. Henwood," he said, by way of introduction.

Christie bowed, and Mrs. Henwood graciously inclined her head. The rich lady was in her most amiable mood that morning, suave and condescending.

"I think I recognize the rosy-faced child who crossed the Channel with us in that dreadful storm," she said, turning to Martin.

"I don't remember a storm," answered Martin.

"Good heavens! man—did you not carry me senseless to the cabin?" she cried.

"Ah! yes—as sick as a dog, madam. Well, it was a little rough."

Martin shuffled with one foot in the sand; he was anxious to be gone, but not to appear in a hurry to depart. Since the lady had shown great taste in buying his cabinet, he respected her more.

This was the second time that she had advanced in his estimation, the first being when she had adopted, almost at his own request, her sister's child.

"Do you intend a long stay in Yarmouth, Mr. Wynn?" asked Mrs. Henwood.

"Only a week—and Christie and I are going to make the most of that week—keeping 'ourselves to ourselves,' as the saying goes."

"Meaning that you do not want any intrusion upon your enjoyment," said Mrs. Henwood.

"Oh! we shall not be intruded upon here," replied Wynn; "our circle of friends is a small one."

"Select, I hope?"

"I have done my best to make it so," said Wynn, looking askance at Mrs. Henwood, and thinking that she was exceedingly frivolous that morning.

"Prudent man!—I find it a very difficult task; but then my circle is larger, and people have become intrusive now-a-days. Your cabinet is well," she added.

"Ah! I'm glad to hear it," said Martin, lighting up at this congenial subject, and speaking of it as though it was a living and delicately constituted

being. "I often think of it, and hope no clumsy hands about your establishment have the polishing or dusting of it."

"I see to that myself. You are welcome to look in now and then, and make sure that your handiwork is properly cared for."

"You are very kind," replied Martin. "I accept your offer with thanks for one day in the future."

"You, Miss Wynn," said Mrs. Henwood, turning to Christie suddenly, "should be very proud of your father's genius."

"I am very proud of him altogether," was the quick reply, made with glistening eyes.

Mrs. Henwood saw that it was truthfully spoken, noted the affection in the words, in the look towards that stalwart man by her side, and her jealous spirit rose at once, extinguishing all affability. Her daughter Lettice could not have spoken or looked like that; her child did not love her with so rare and precious an affection; this man had the advantage of her, and was to be envied!

"I fear that I am detaining you," she said, coldly.

"We were thinking of looking round the place before dinner," said Martin. "Are you ready, Christie, to bid Mrs. Henwood good morning?"

"Good morning," said Mrs. Henwood, without looking towards them; "possibly we shall see each other again before you depart for London."

When Martin Wynn was out of hearing, he said,

"I hope not! That woman always makes me feel uncomfortable—I don't admire her ways, and I always see over her shoulder my old father's face. That old gentleman will trouble me——"

"The past—the past!—and we are not to think of it for a week."

"Right you are," said Martin, brightening up; "this a memorable week for us—a jolly week, I may say, if we can but dodge the old girl with the false curls."

But the dodging was ineffective, for the next morning they met again, exchanging bows only, much to Martin's gratification; and again for the third time, in the evening, on the Wellington Pier, when Mrs. Henwood, fraught with a new idea, faced them with Zachary and Lettice, and, to Martin's amazement, went through a formal introduction of her daughter and nephew to

them. Martin was somewhat near-sighted, or he would have never fallen into the trap; but his surprise recovered from, he did not regret the accident, forming a plan also with wonderful celerity to improve the occasion.

That plan concerned Zachary, who had changed colour and betrayed a certain amount of confusion at his aunt's introduction; for he was as unprepared as Lettice or Martin for the meeting, Mrs. Henwood having maintained silence concerning the new arrivals in Yarmouth.

Mrs. Henwood was not inclined to part with Martin Wynn on this occasion—that would have interfered with her plans. She dashed into conversation with that easy fluency that long practice at inanities had afforded her, addressing Martin, Christie, her daughter Lettice, and Zach in turn, and by some means or other drawing all into one general topic.

She wound up with—

"But these musical evenings are very cold at Yarmouth, and sitting still to hear a militia band play out of tune is a rash experiment. Will you take my nephew's arm for a turn or two down the pier, Miss Wynn? Oh, thank you, Mr.

Wynn—you and I can talk of old times together more pleasantly now."

Before Martin Wynn had thoroughly comprehended how it had all been managed, Zachary Fernwell was marching away with Christie on one arm and his cousin Lettice on the other, whilst he himself was left to the wharfinger's widow.

Zach was probably more surprised than the rest, although he disguised his astonishment sufficiently well. He was silent for a time, however, and Christie and Lettice felt a little embarrassment.

They were a gloomy trio enough for the first five minutes; then Zach exerted himself, and talked of small matters—sea-air, Yarmouth bloaters, and visitors, and Lettice exchanged civilities across him, seeing that Christie was somewhat shy. Lettice, to Christie's surprise, spoke of their first meeting on board the Boulogne boat, when they were children together, and struck up a fleeting companionship; and Christie's courage returned as her awe for the young lady diminished. Zach was silent concerning the past; he thought it best. He did not know how far it was safe to venture on that dangerous ground; and he feared that the

subject of his brother Teddy was scarcely a safe one at that time, and would assuredly embarrass him. Christie also was in ignorance how much or how little Lettice Henwood knew of the second brother, and remained silent also, though Teddy was a topic on which she would have liked to dwell for a while. The three, after a time, got on very well together; they had all three met in the past, and that fact speedily thawed the reserve between them.

Mrs. Henwood had by this time laid her groundwork, and began business.

"All this seems very strange to you?" she remarked to Martin as they set off arm-in-arm down the pier together.

"Very inconsistent is the better phrase."

"Why inconsistent?"

Martin went back to the time when they met first on board the Boulogne boat, just as Lettice went back to that period also.

"You were a prouder woman," he said; "and reproved me for my rudeness in addressing you, and in allowing my child to take the liberty of speaking to yours."

"I did not know what kind of man you were

then,' said Mrs. Henwood, "or what your daughter was like. Surely you do not blame me for being careful of casual acquaintances?"

Martin had not seen it in that light before. He answered,

"No, I do not blame you—and I was more abrupt in my manner eight or nine years ago."

"You are exactly the same—I do not see any difference. Just as abrupt, or rude, or straightforward, or whatever you like to call it."

"Straightforward sounds more complimentary," said Martin.

"Still I am a little inconsistent—granted!" she said, reverting to his former verdict on her conduct—"it seems inconsistent to be walking about this pier with you, of all men."

"You are not in town, that's one thing," replied Martin; "and folk at the sea-side generally get a little of the starchiness rubbed out of them. I really think that you have improved for the better since the day we crossed the sea together. I did not admire your manner then, at all."

"Ah! I have bought a cabinet since."

"That's nothing to do with it," affirmed Martin.

Mrs. Henwood was silent for an instant; she

was approaching her first parallel, and it was necessary to ask a favour of this odd man, and obtain it, if possible.

"Since I saw you yesterday, I have been thinking a great deal of your daughter, Mr. Wynn."

"Indeed!"

"She appears to me a very frank and amiable girl—a girl somewhat different to the young ladies of my acquaintance."

"There's scarcely another like her in the world," affirmed Martin, always to be drawn out on this particular topic—"the most generous, the least unselfish, the kindest, and most thoughtful creature that ever made a lonely man's house bright."

Mrs. Henwood could not repress a sigh, although she affected to treat Martin Wynn's opinion lightly.

"You are a doting father. I wonder you have not spoiled her."

"I have been a careful father, too, I think."

"I have been a careful mother," was the reply; "I have spent no end of money on my daughter."

"Who, in her mother's opinion, is the best in all the world, too, I hope."

"That's it!—that's it!" said Mrs. Henwood, rapidly; "she isn't."

Mrs. Henwood became excited; and to grow excited was to drop the mask of artificiality.

"I am sorry to hear a mother——"

"Wait a moment, we are passing her. Take care of Miss Wynn, Zachary, until we relieve guard. Miss Wynn, do not believe all that young gentleman tells you, he's a sad deceiver," here the frivolous died out, and the serious set in again; "*she's* not a girl that is a comfort to me, Mr. Wynn, and I begin to feel that now."

"I wonder whose fault it is," said Martin, absently.

"Eh?"

"I was wondering if it were all her fault," repeated Martin; "it is impossible to say. Bad teachers, perhaps—bad example somewhere, certainly."

"I can't tell where. I have been the best of mothers. I have spared no expense."

Eternally harping on the money that she had flung away on Lettice's education, as though money were before love in developing the affections. Did she begin to feel now the want of a daughter?—the loneliness of her own future casting its shadow before her even then, despite her little mind, her love of pleasure and self?

"The expense is not worth a thought," said Martin; "money cannot make a daughter lovable. She seems a very graceful, nice kind of girl. Intelligent, I should say."

"Clever enough," remarked Mrs. Henwood; "oh! there's no doubt of her cleverness. But she's eccentric and hard, and I want you, whilst you remain at Yarmouth, to allow your daughter to be her companion, all you can. I think that Lettice would soften—become more womanly, in fact—if she knew a truly amiable girl of her own age."

Martin did not answer at once. It was a strange request to come from Mrs. Henwood, telling more of the mother, and less of that mother's pride and reverence for position than he had hitherto witnessed; it was a request, perhaps, a little grateful to him, and flattering to Christie; but it was a dead blow to the enjoyment of his holiday, and the idea did not make his heart leap.

"You refuse me?" she said, tetchily.

"It requires consideration," he replied; "I do not see the advantage on our side of the house, at all events."

"You are afraid of your daughter taking a bad example from mine, perhaps?"

"No, I'm not afraid of that," said Martin, with a laugh; "I can set that idea of yours aside. I don't mind much," he added, "about my own holiday; and if Christie be happy with your daughter, why, so much the better. Companionship with one of her own age may be good for Christie too; and if you think that my girl can be any service to yours, let them be together. But let it all come round naturally; and if Christie object not—it all depends upon *her*, mind—or your fine daughter don't upset the dignity of mine, I have no objection to urge."

"You are an obliging man—I thank you very much, Mr. Wynn," she said, almost pressing his arm with her hand, by way of expression to her gratitude; "I wish that you had risen more high in your profession."

"Why?"

"We should have been more on an equality," she explained; "I could have sought your advice more frequently. My only adviser now is the head manager of my business—a clever man in business hours, but out of them no sense, no feeling."

"Ah!" said Martin, "you're coming round to

the position question again, and that always aggravates me and spoils you. Granted that I am not a rich man, and that you are a wealthy woman —that your father was a great merchant, and that mine is a night watchman on your wharf, and a man I would pray you to discharge, if I were sure that it would not break his heart—still, if you're going to bestow upon me any of your pride again —that awful bumptiousness!—why, I shall start to Lowestoft in the morning, and be quit of you."

"Are you a Chartist?" asked Mrs. Henwood.

"Not exactly."

"You have such shocking ideas about equality —you don't seem to care for people's rank, and you talk a great deal like a Chartist, or a Socialist, or something of that sort."

"I may have caught the complaint in Paris," said Martin, drily, "where *les ouvriers* do not worship rank, and explode all of a hurry when rank turns the screw on the liberties. Or," he added, more seriously, "I may have read in the Bible that riches are not valued in heaven, and that the beggar there will stand a better chance than Dives."

"I think your religion is worse than my pride,"

she said—"a religious man is something very terrible to me."

"You are not religious?"

"God bless me, no! I go to church now and then, of course, but I haven't time to be serious. When I am an older woman, I daresay that I shall give up the pomps and vanities with an easy grace enough. But praying always, and keeping away from balls and theatres, and looking upon every little pleasure as frivolous and harmful, as you dissenters do—I couldn't give in to all that!"

"Look here," said Martin Wynn, suddenly, "you want your daughter reformed, softened, or something by contact with mine. We'll make a double job of this—I'll have a turn at your reformation."

"Very well. But you must not preach too many sermons."

Mrs. Henwood looked up into Martin Wynn's serious face, and laughed at him, shaking her side curls playfully. She was in a very amiable mood that night again—doubtless the sea air was beneficial to her. It was all very inconsistent, as Martin had said, and as she had thought, for that

matter; but it was none the less charming for its novelty, and the rich woman could not look back upon a happier evening in her brilliant world than she was spending that night with Martin Wynn.

It was all very strange!

CHAPTER XII.

TWO DIALOGUES.

THE scheme which Martin Wynn had consented to foster seemed likely to prove successful in some of its results, at least. Lettice Henwood and Christie Wynn *were* drawn together by the very difference in their respective natures; there was a gentleness in Christie that was very winning, and there was a strangeness in Lettice that aroused Christie's interest. The same instinct that had drawn them together when children, seemed to exist again, and make them friends, almost in spite of themselves.

Martin Wynn gave a fair field, and no favour. He and his daughter met the Henwood party at every opportunity; there were long mornings on the sands together, long evenings on the pier. In the afternoon Mrs. Henwood's carriage would bring round Lettice to the lodgings in the back

street, and whirl off again with Christie by Lettice's side. Martin was glad to see that his daughter lost that set expression, that new gravity, perhaps, which had induced him to bring her to Yarmouth, and he rejoiced secretly at the change. But Christie began to fear, however, that she was neglecting her father, and expressed that fear very speedily.

"I must not let these new grand acquaintances turn my head," she said, playfully; "and I fancy that you and I had better escape them—go for a long day into the country together, and break the spell at once."

"We'll stay another week here instead."

Christie's eyes sparkled at this assertion.

"Is it not extravagant?" was her next thought.

"We'll chance it," answered her father; "you are happy here, I know, and I want you always to be happy. You like Lettice Henwood, too?"

"Yes, I like her. But how strange she is!—she seems full of little mysteries; I don't always understand her."

"If she's anything like her mother, I'll warrant you don't," affirmed Martin.

"And oh! father, if Mrs. Henwood were not

taking care of you so nicely, I don't think that I should have the cruelty to leave you."

"I have been trying an experiment with that lady," said Martin, "but it does not answer. She's too tough for me at present—I am afraid that it will be a failure. I have been trying to make her less worldly, and more pious, Chris."

"Indeed!" and Christie opened her large eyes to their fullest extent.

"I had an idea that I should succeed on that first night we met on the pier, but she has altered again since then," said Martin, ruefully; "I could sooner reform every beachman in Yarmouth—if he needed reformation—than that worldly, sceptical, half-witted woman."

"If she should make a convert of you, and teach you to love her and her money, father?"

Mr. Wynn laughed immoderately at this.

"I don't think that that idea will ever disturb her thoughts, or mine. I wouldn't have her, Chris, for fifty times her money; and I'm sure she is just as likely to marry my father as to think of me. What an odd remark of yours!"

"It was Lettice's—yesterday. Only spoken as

a jest, of course," she added, seeing that Mr. Wynn suddenly became grave.

"She *is* an odd girl, then," asserted Martin; "I am not surprised that you don't quite understand her."

When the odd girl had called for Christie, and they had gone out together again, Martin Wynn thought seriously of what had been mentioned as a jest. He thought of Mrs. Henwood, and possibly there might have stolen to him, for an instant, the temptation to try his chance for independence; for good men have temptations to resist, and Mrs. Henwood's manner was remarkable, if not encouraging. But Martin very speedily shrugged his shoulders in his French manner, leaned back in his chair, and laughed heartily at the absurdity of the whole story. After a while he shuddered at the obduracy and the eccentricity of the woman to whom his daughter and he had recently alluded; he had had several days' experience of Mrs. Henwood now, and he was a fair judge of character. He had found her more vain, worldly, and less susceptible to good influences that he had imagined.

He believed that she was half-witted, as he had

asserted to Christie that day, or her actions would never have been so eccentric and unfathomable. A vainer man than he might have found a reason for it all, more especially after that afternoon's conversation; but he cut that reason out of his common-sense book, and laughed at its absurdity. Amidst it all, he pitied Mrs. Henwood very much; he saw the solitude of her position, and how her own faults, her want of judgment, and the shallow-heartedness of her acquaintances had but left her splendid isolation. He could readily account for this strange mother possessing so strange a child as Lettice; but he was naturally too gentle to wound her by his opinion, for the evil was done, and the child was a woman. He could account for Zach's new nature, too; he regretted, for the first time, the advancement of that young man, who scrupulously shunned him as yet, and with whom Martin Wynn was resolved upon one discussion, before he left Yarmouth for good. He was very curious concerning Zachary Fernwell. Once or twice the thought came to him to tell Mrs. Henwood the whole story of Teddy's progress, so that one barrier between the brothers should, at least, be set aside, and one excuse the less remain to Zach

for his unapproachableness; but he noticed that the brow contracted, and all sympathy died out of Mrs. Henwood's face, immediately he ventured a hint concerning Zach's brother and father, even though the former had risen in the world. She had had enough of one Fernwell, it was evident; that she did not love that one in any great degree was still more apparent, and Martin thought that he was scarcely justified in perilling Zach's position for the sake of a better understanding between the brothers.

"It is Zach's loss," he said, "and Teddy can wait."

He did not wait long himself for the chance of securing Zach for a listener; Zach had been isolated to a certain extent, by Lettice making a friend of Christie, and though his solitary walks helped to keep Mrs. Henwood in the dark concerning his future intentions, he was inclined to feel that he was wasting valuable time, and not gaining any ground. He rambled about the sands listlessly enough, and in one of these rambles, Martin, having left Christie with her new friends, came upon him unwares.

Zach shook hands, and coloured as usual. He

was never at his ease with Martin Wynn, and his want of self-command annoyed him very much.

"Good morning, sir," he said; "I am going for a long walk, Fritton way—a constitutional."

He was about to add a remark upon the general appearance of the day, and disappear, when Martin said—

"I will go a little way with you upon the road, if you have no objection."

"No—no," he said, after a moment's hesitation.

They set forth together then, making for the Regent Road, and the bridge across the Yar.

Zach's heart beat very fast, despite the stolidity of his countenance. No, he did not feel comfortable with this man; he had never liked him; he was over-good, and over-obtrusive, and there was something of the boy's fear that he had had for him still existent, to add to his embarrassment. He knew, too, what this man would dwell upon, and he did not see his way to a clear defence with him. Altogether, he was sorry now that he had come to Yarmouth.

"I don't know, Zach—if you will allow me to remain thus familiar with you—" Martin said; "that I should be doing my duty, if I were to leave

"I think that some day I may benefit him more by proceeding my own course," said Zach.

"Or he may benefit you more—we shall see. You asked me for my opinion—I did not intend to force it upon you, unsolicited."

"You are a good man—I know it, sir," said Zach. "*I* have not the courage to follow the path you would map out for me."

"I do not advise you to attempt it now, with your thoughts fixed on advancement in the world. Mrs. Henwood told me that you were clever, and believing her—seeing it in your face, for the matter of that—I thought that I would venture to intrude upon you with an old friend's advice before I left for London. It is possible that I may not see you again—and I never like to lose a chance."

Zach waited patiently. He was glad that the subject of his brother was dismissed; it was a subject that pained him to dwell upon, and troubled the little conscience that was left him.

"I have a presentiment that you *will* succeed in the world," said Martin, "rise step by step to wealth—become as rich a man as your aunt's husband was, perhaps. You are cool, painstaking, and far-seeing, and I think must rise, unless you

lose your presence of mind, and clutch too eagerly at greatness."

Zach started at this; it seemed a warning that was necessary to him, for he was anxious to be sure of his position, and his coolness was in part assumed.

"You will struggle to get rich—granted?"

"It is no mean ambition—granted also."

"In that struggle, then, do not, Zach Fernwell, let your mind narrow, or your heart collapse more than it has done," said Martin very earnestly; "struggle as much as you will, as hard as you please, but let it be an honourable fight to the end, trampling down no weaker man, and coveting no one's faster progress. In the struggle, it will do you good to think of that elder brother struggling also on a lower ground, and to pray for his success at times, as I am sure he prays for yours. It will do you good, too, to think of the dangers that you have escaped, and which I hope you thank your God for—it will keep that pride down, and stop it growing with you, to prejudice yourself, and all those noble impulses that should be natural to a youth like you. And when you are rich—" He stopped, and Zach stopped also to listen.

Martin's words stirred all the good impulses that remained with him—for Martin was in earnest, and Zach not wholly callous. "When you are rich—think again of your brother, who may need your help, and who may be in tribulation. After that, think of the poor—do all you can for them, you who know what struggles they have to live, and what temptations come to them from all corners of the earth. Seek them out—save them from a fate that might have been yours and your brother's—go earnestly to work, and let your good deeds strike home. There—after that, I'll bid you good morning."

And Martin Wynn very abruptly set his face the other way, and walked back to Yarmouth. He had preached quite a sermon, not without effect, he hoped—at all events he had done his duty, and given a young man, setting out in life with fair prospects, the best advice that lay in his power. He had a dim consciousness that that young man was impenetrable, or, at all events, if not wholly impervious, still a man whose mind was made up to rise—honourably, if he could, perhaps, but, at all events, to rise.

Zach proceeded on the Fritton Road for awhile

—suddenly stopping to consider all that had been said to him, appreciating the good motives that had forced Wynn upon him, and thinking that he would do his best to behave fairly to the world. He felt the better for the lesson for a while; it may be seen hereafter that he never wholly forgot it—for he was never wholly bad, only in some things unutterably weak.

"If Martin Wynn but knew all," he groaned, "all that placed me in this position, for instance, would he have wasted so much advice upon me?"

The advice, he thought, after a time, was not fitting for him, for Martin could not see into the inner chamber, where so many dark thoughts were stored. When he thought that Martin was far enough in advance of him he turned back towards Yarmouth also, making many resolutions to himself—hoping some day that he might be worthy of a good man's interest, and thinking that the way to independence might be less tortuous and deceptive than he had considered it. And yet not his way—not the way he had marked out for himself, and was already pursuing! He stood on the iron bridge that crossed the Yar, as full of thought

as Teddy had been upon the Bridge of Sighs some time ago; he leaned over and looked at the shipping, and then at the sailors on the quay, wondering if amongst the latter there was a man who had ever been as ambitious as he was. Leaving the bridge, he was suddenly accosted by a grey-bearded, grey-haired man, clad in a shabby suit of black, buttoned to the chin, and with a napless white hat, pulled very much over his forehead. The man looked upon the ground whilst he addressed him, so that it was difficult to see the face; but the voice at once chilled every drop of blood in Zach's body.

"I beg your pardon, sir—I ask ten thousand pardons for intruding upon you—but I am a man in deep distress."

"I have no money to give away," said Zach, forgetting already one portion of Martin Wynn's advice.

"It is a case of urgent necessity, knowing no law," persisted the man, speaking with great rapidity, and rubbing one thin hand over the other whilst he spoke. "A man who has travelled much, and suffered much, endured intense privations, and said little, asks you to have a little mercy on him. An old man, too—old enough to be your father, sir!"

Zach felt that he was recognized.

"What do you require?"

"As many pounds as you can spare me," he said, suddenly looking up, greedy and sardonic; "for I have had a long tramp after you, and I cannot part with you, sinking all the paternity, for nothing."

"You are talking like a madman," said Zach. "What do you mean?"

He would make one stand for it, he thought.

"Your name is Fernwell?"

"No."

"Admirably denied! Say Henwood, then?"

Zach shook his head.

"A coincidence, then—I apologize," said the man, raising his hat politely, and speaking in a louder voice. "I have been watching the wrong man for the last fortnight, and you are not Zachary Henwood, sub-manager of Henwood's Wharf, manager on his own account of a most charming and secret love affair between himself and Mrs. Henwood's daughter."

"Silence, for God's sake!" cried Zach. "Where do you live?"

"In the Rows. Row No. 901—a cheerful apart-

ment, with a bad look out, and the ventilation not properly attended to."

"Let us go there."

"At once?"

"Yes, at once."

Mr. Fernwell took his son's arm, and they turned into a back street. He looked into Zach's face again with his own evil eyes.

"Candidly, my dear Zachary, would you have rather seen me, or the devil?"

"The devil!" was the frank response.

"Ah! such is filial affection in the nineteenth century! This way, *mon fils*. What charming weather we have had lately, Zachary!"

CHAPTER XIII.

ROW NO. 901.

THOSE of our readers who have visited the great town of Yarmouth will have no difficulty in bringing to recollection the numerous courts or alleys running between King Street and Gaol Street, Gaol Street and South Quay, King Street and Howard Street, Market Place and Charlotte Street, &c. Here congregate three-fourths of the poor of Yarmouth, many of the fishermen, and all the vice that takes refuge in large towns, and finds such places as these rows capital hiding-places till "the breeze blows over."

All the vice in Yarmouth, after all, is not appalling; and the majority of these narrow, strong-smelling closes is tenanted by folk struggling very hard for a living, and struggling honestly too. A few rows have a questionable repute, however, and in one of these, at the time in which our story is

laid, resided Mr. Fernwell. Calling it Row No. 901, then, we follow Zach and his father into as dark, dirty, and unwholesome a thoroughfare of three feet wide as a man of average nerve would have hesitated to enter in the daylight, and objected to at all hazards after nightfall.

"Men ascend and descend, Zachary," said Mr. Fernwell to his son, as they passed into the Row; "you rising nimbly to the top of the tree, and the father prostrate and broken up at the bottom—where is the moral law of that, I wonder? Is there justice?—fair play?—or anything in that?"

Zach did not answer. He was thinking of his next step, of what was best to be done under the disagreeable circumstances that had arisen. How far he should succumb to this unnatural parent—how far it would be policy to stand his ground and defy him.

At the open door of the centre house in the Row was afforded the information that "Jonas Tuggins, chimney-sweep," lived there; which information Zach had also noticed was affixed at the corner of the Row, with an index hand pointing in the direction he had taken, and under which hand, to prevent mistakes, and Yarmouth seeking other

chimney-sweepers, was inscribed a "DOWN HERE," in Roman capitals.

At the door of this house was a sooty youth, home from business, and luxuriating on the door-step.

"Erebus—Sam, I mean," said Mr. Fernwell, "a bottle of whiskey, Scotch, is immediately required. This gentleman will give you the money, and tell you that you may keep the change for all the trouble incurred. Borrow two glasses, if you can."

The youth stared from Zachary to Mr. Fernwell, extending his grimy hand to the former, who placed money in it.

"This way—mind the first step, Zach, it's broken; and then stride out for the third, for the second's gone altogether."

"Up here?"

"Yes, the top of the house. Ah! good morning, Mr. Tuggins—business brisk, I hope?"

"When will ye coom wi' the rent, now?" shouted Tuggins, in the Norfolk accent; "aint I had enoof o' waitin'?"

"Directly, honest friend," with a nod in the direction of his son; "can I say fairer than that?"

"Noo."

Up the next flight; finally in a narrow and dirty room, the ceiling as black as Mr. Tuggins, the rafters grinning through it. A litter of shavings on the floor, a deal table, one chair, and a box of lucifers, the only furniture.

Zach sighed. It was the reflex of the old life; it struck home to him, this wretched room; the miasma in the place was not new; it belonged to Whitechapel, to the Drury Lane courts, to all such dens as these; he could imagine that he had dreamed of better times now—of life at Wimbledon, life abroad, and the life of business, with the chances of success ahead of him,—and that he had suddenly awakened in that sphere to which he properly belonged. Mr. Fernwell took off his hat, and dropped into a sitting posture with his back to the door, crouching there like a thing of evil as he was. The full light from the window fell upon his haggard face, white, seamed, and dirty, with every particle of the past handsomeness quenched out. He waved his hand with an easy grace towards the one chair in the room, and then clasped it with the other round his knees, and gently rocked himself to and fro, the master of the position!

"What do you want with me?" asked Zach; "why do you haunt me, and stand in my way like this? I have done you no harm—I have but wished for a better life for you."

"God save all my good-wishers! and that is a fine benediction," said Mr. Fernwell. "Sit down, Zachary, and make yourself at home. We have a considerable amount of business to transact."

Zach sat down thus adjured, and Mr. Fernwell, hearing steps upon the stairs, edged a little away from the door to admit of the entrance of the sooty youth with the whiskey. The whiskey bottle was passed through, and with it one glass, minus a stem.

"They won't let no more glasses down this Row for no one," explained Sam. "This is father's—so take care of it."

"Every care, my shock-headed Ganymede," responded Mr. Fernwell. "Now, be off with you!"

He pushed the door to suddenly, eliciting a howl from Sam, whose fingers he shut in by the process; opened the door again to reproach Sam for his clumsiness; once more closed it, and set his back against it.

"You drink?" he asked.

"No."

"Not taking after father or mother. Saints of heaven! that is very strange," said Mr. Fernwell. "Well, I will not press youth to any indiscretion, though drink's a fine thing—a very fine thing, indeed. What should I have been without it?"

He drew a clasp knife from his pocket, opened the blade, and with one dexterous movement of the knife against the neck of the bottle, the cork, with an upper ring of glass attached to it, flew to the other end of the room.

"I enjoy this interview, marvellously, Zach," said Mr. Fernwell; "it is the scene which I painted in my mind's eye long ago, and the reality is keen and refreshing to me. I would prolong it in every way in my power—I would keep you here, a dearly-beloved son, for ever, if I could. Your health."

He tilted a glassful of whiskey down his throat, and then set the bottle down with the glass covering the broken neck to keep the spirit from evaporating.

"I'll not drink any more till business is over—I only wanted a stimulant, a spur; and that being

applied, get the best of Richard Fernwell, if you can."

"Tell me in what way I can be of service to you—and let me go," said Zach. "I will not stay here long."

"You will wait my pleasure," shouted the father, losing his mild demeanour on the instant, and rising and lowering rapidly his goat's-hair eyebrows—"you will wait here till *my* permission is given you to leave. By ——!"—he swore a fearful oath here—"things have come to a pretty pass indeed, when my own flesh and blood attempts to look me down!"

Zach was cool and collected now. He was in danger, but he had the power of steeling his nerves to hide all sense of fear, and his cunning told him the best way to hold his ground.

"I am not the boy whom you ill-used, and would have killed at any time to serve your purpose. I am a man strong enough to resist your extortions, if I think it necessary; and I am not likely ever again to be your tool. But—God help me and you!—you are my father, and I will assist you so far as it lies in my power!"

"Very well," said Mr. Fernwell in milder tones.

"I daresay we can arrange this little matter. I am poor, and you are rich."

"I am a clerk in my aunt's service—that is all."

"You will get rich."

It was the second time that day that that assurance had been given Zach.

"You will rise to riches—and then to greatness, for you know what is written in the Spanish comedy of 'Celestina?'"

Zach shook his head. He knew nothing of Spanish comedies; he did not care to know.

"'There is not any place so high,'" quoted Mr. Fernwell, "'whereunto an ass laden with gold will not get up.' I believe it; and I believe that there is not any place so low—this is my own idea—whereunto a clever fellow may not sink, if he get a taste for *that*. It damned me, Zachary, years ago!"

He struck the bottle of spirits with his hand savagely, and them scrambled eagerly forwards to save it from falling, cursing himself for his stupidity.

"No, no, a good friend *this*," he said, changing his note to one of praise. "I said so before. I retract all hard words—I am fond of drink.

Oblige me with that glass—it has rolled in your direction."

Zach pushed the glass towards his father with his foot, and Mr. Fernwell, securing it, filled it with whiskey, and tilted the fire-water down his throat with his usual celerity.

"I am scarcely myself," he said; "this interview excites me. I am too proud of my prize—let me compose myself a bit."

Zach endeavoured to wait patiently. He could not expedite his father's departure by resistance.

"I have not been much of a trouble to you, or your brother," the father began, after a while; "I have let you proceed your own ways, and interfered not with the great schemes of regeneration that have placed you both so much above the sire. I went abroad."

"I know it."

"Probably. The newspapers announced my intention of leaving England for seven years—public characters always find themselves in print. Candidly, my dear Zachary, I was resolving in my mind an admirable little plan for swooping down upon you, when the law swooped on me instead. So be it—I took my sentence, and I worked it out. Free of

all demands, I come back here to begin a new life; and as I shall not offer to society any reasonable excuse for locking me up again, as I shall shun evil acquaintances, and, in a few words, keep out of trouble, why, I am safe. I sit here the picture of reformation."

He looked at the whiskey-bottle, but resisted the temptation to replenish his glass—time enough for revelry when Zach had gone.

"What money do you want to keep away from me?"

"A yearly income—a per centage on your salary, rising with your own, so that I may the more heartily exult in your prosperity."

"I have a hundred-and-fifty pounds a year."

"It's a lie! You must have three hundred, at least; you are already a manager, and Mrs. Henwood has been extremely liberal."

Zach saw that it was useless to deceive his father on that point. His father knew all, it seemed.

"After all, they have not made much of you," sneered the villain, "when you can lie so readily as that. Why, I should not have taught you worse. My theory was to keep you ignorant and

unlettered, trusting all to nature—see what art has done for you!"

"I will give you fifty pounds a year—I will send to you once a year fifty pounds, if you will keep away from London."

"London is my home," said Fernwell; "I am attached to London streets—I know every stone in them."

"If you will keep away from me, then."

"Fifty pounds a year will not do."

"It is all that I can afford."

"By heaven, I will have half!" cried Fernwell, with gleaming eyes, and his hands outstretched, and clenched—"I swear it, and I'll have it. I have been held down too long, and known privation too long, to let the chance escape me. You have risen for me as well as for yourself, and I will share the profits, or you share this penury. I will have no more of this hand-to-mouth existence, begging for crusts, living in holes like these, and dressed like this—I *will* have money!"

"Fifty pounds."

"I will have a hundred-and-fifty pounds a year from you, and that's too little. I sold my soul for money years ago—just as you will, mark me, for

you take after me—and I missed the money, and lost my soul as well. Damned hard, wasn't it? The Henwoods were too sharp for me, and I was a fool to trust in human sympathy. I trust now in no one but myself, and you will give me money, or I will drag you to my level!"

He leaned against the wall in his excitement, and breathed heavily. He was not so strong as he used to be, and was easily overpowered. He reached a shaking hand out for his stimulant again; he could not resist any longer; he must have drink to fight the battle out.

"I shall not give this money," said Zach—"it is a vile extortion."

"Yes—yes, you will. Wait till I get cool again, and can talk to you. Oh! yes, you will give it me."

He took time to recover his breath, shutting his eyes, and gasping somewhat. In due course he was more like the bland, sardonic being, who had first confronted his son.

"If you don't agree to give me that money, I shall call on Mrs. Henwood, and tender the result of my long watch upon you. You are acting over again the father's life, for you are scheming

for the daughter's hand, and the old story will surely set her against you."

"She will believe it to be only malice on your part. Your revenge for my defiance of you!"

"I have my proofs, and Mrs. Henwood is a suspicious woman."

Zach thought seriously of the chances for and against him.

"I will give you a hundred a year," he said.

"I will have half," snapped Fernwell. "I am going to open a business of my own in a respectable way, and less than half will not do. A hundred and fifty pounds."

"I have named my sum," said Zach rising, "if you will not agree to it, do your worst."

"One moment more. I will go to Mrs. Henwood, Zach, and tell her how she has been deceived in you for many years, tell her that when she thought you at your best, you were not deserving of her help. I will tell her that old tale of how I meant to rob her wharf, and how you meant to help me!—agreed to help me, in your fear and desperation, if it had not been for Teddy, who went with his lies to Griffin Street, and made you the hero of that little story. Why—she would shut

her doors in your face, and hurl you back with horror to the streets. Do you think I do not know the woman whom you serve, or that I could not prove it? I can—and I will!"

Zach had turned deadly pale now—it was a ghastly pallor, very different to his usual looks, and he dropped into his chair again, and shivered. He had forgotten in his defence that weapon in the hands of his adversary; and yet that fear had led him to stand apart from his brother, lest a chance word, an unguarded expression, should unmask him. If he had repented at the same instant of that weakness, of that step backward, as it were, into the benighted land from which he had made some feeble efforts to escape, who would believe him—who would for ever afterwards have one grain of faith in him? He must be dragged to the old level; his father was right—he surrendered!

"I will give you the money. It is more than I can afford—it is keeping me poor, at a time when my only chance is before me. You are not acting wisely, even for yourself."

"My dear Zachary, I cannot afford to wait. I may go off in a flash—at any moment—and the present hour with me must be my golden one."

"A hundred and fifty pounds—in what manner will you receive it?"

"Quarterly. Send it by half-notes to the address with which I will presently furnish you. I will write to the office."

"No—to Somerset Terrace, New Kent Road."

"Very good—it is immaterial. And the first quarter's payment was due, I think, last June?"

"I have not the money here."

"But you have been saving already, for you are a careful man, and—there, I do not take after you, Zachary. I will write to Somerset Terrace, next week; meanwhile—something on account."

"I can spare seven pounds, now."

"Thank you—we'll make seven do until we get to town."

"And you meet me no more—you sink away!" said Zach eagerly.

"Into endless night—you may rely upon me."

Zach put seven sovereigns on the table, and Mr. Fernwell nodded. They would be quite safe there, the father thought, but on second considerations, perhaps, it would be expedient to pocket them at once. He rose and walked sedately to the table; the drink had not affected his gait yet, though his

eyes betrayed the potency of the fluid that he had already imbibed.

"You may go now," he said; "business is over, and only pleasure remains—you seek your pleasure in women, I in the bottle. Get rich, my son—but make more sure than I did of the money with the wife, or, by all that is holy, we shall topple over together! And if I can be of assistance at any time, in any peril, command your most obedient servant."

He bowed very low, working his shaggy eyebrows as he bowed. He had won the fight, and yet the conqueror stooped to be vanquished. Zach hastened away, glad to escape from him, and Mr. Fernwell flung up his arms exultingly as the son went down the stairs.

"He will be a man of wealth to me," he cried; "I see him in the future, an El-Dorado! I hope that I shall live to enjoy life with him—I'm only eight-and-forty now—and I ought, if I keep quiet. I'll try, for I haven't been a lucky man hitherto, and ill-luck has almost shaken me to pieces. Here, I'll reform at once. I'll not drink all the whiskey—I'll go and ask Tuggins to help me drink it."

He picked up his bottle and glass, and went downstairs, full of his nobler and better resolutions.

CHAPTER XIV.

LETTICE AND CHRISTIE.

MARTIN WYNN'S holiday was close upon its termination; the fortnight was nearly at an end, and neither father nor daughter thought of a further extension of leave.

"If you would only allow your daughter to remain with us a few weeks," said Mrs. Henwood, "it would do Lettice a great deal of good. I really fancy that my daughter is altering already."

"You are very kind," answered Martin, "but Christie would not stay, I am sure."

"I think that she would."

"Ask her," said Martin.

Mrs. Henwood did not ask Christie herself, however, but suggested, with affected carelessness, to Lettice that she might ask Miss Wynn to remain a few weeks with them, if it pleased her. Lettice, attached to her new friend already, put

the question to her eagerly, pressing her to stay with all the power she possessed.

Christie's firmness had not been over-estimated by Martin; Christie was resolved to return with her father; it was very kind of Mrs. Henwood and Lettice, but she must go back.

"I don't see why," said Lettice petulantly.

"I would not leave my father alone for the world," said Christie, "for I am vain enough to think that he would be very miserable without me. It is not as if he had another daughter to take care of him —or if there was any one who understood him as well as myself."

"What will you do when you marry?"

"I shall see to him—I shall arrange all that!" cried Christie. "Do you think if I marry, that it will be the signal to forget him then?"

"Not exactly, perhaps; but there will be a husband to take the first place. But this is not the theme—and loving him as you do, affords you no excuse for refusing me the little favour that I ask."

"Oh! but it is a great favour," said Christie, "and I cannot."

"You are tired of me—everybody is tired of

me very speedily," was the quick assertion here.

"No, I am not," answered Christie, stealing her arms fondly round her; "I have been very happy with you—knowing you more intimately, I love you better, and am less afraid of you."

"Afraid of me!—were you ever afraid of me, then?"

"Oh! you are a grand young lady, and I am only the daughter of a marqueterie worker," said Christie, laughing.

"Mamma should hear you say this," said Lettice, a little scornfully; "she likes the world that is a step beneath us to be cowed by our position."

"I scarcely understand the tone in which you speak of your mamma, Lettice," said Christie, after a moment's hesitation; "I have been mustering courage to allude to this before—will you forgive me, even if I scold you?"

This dialogue was occurring in the front drawing-room of the Terrace facing the sea; Lettice had taken Christie home with her after a drive, Mrs. Henwood was lying down in her state bedroom after the fatigues of the morning, Martin Wynn had gone for a long walk—a tramp of some sixteen or eighteen miles, and would not be home

till seven in the evening. Zachary Henwood was expected to dinner only; therefore the two maidens had leisure for a long *tête-à-tête* together. They afforded a striking contrast to each other, seated side by side there. Christie, slight and graceful, with fair hair and glowing face, all life, animation, brightness; Lettice, fair-haired also, very tall, a little angular, and her pale cheeks still impervious to any efforts of the sea breeze to bring a brighter colour to them. There was animation in Lettice's face that afternoon, though, and as the conversation between them was continued, that animation increased rather than diminished.

"Scold me if you will, Christie—I will take my scolding with due humility."

"No, on second thoughts I'll not scold you," was the reply; "it is only your odd way of speaking—cold and sharp as the wind we had yesterday. You love your mamma very dearly, Lettice—why, all girls love their mothers!"

"Christie, it is not that I love her not—but the grave doubt comes to me sometimes as to whether she loves me."

"Oh! hush!—please!" cried Christie; "if she should come in and hear you talking thus!"

"I should not mind," answered Lettice; "I have implied as much more than once."

"You have!" cried Christie aghast.

"You cannot comprehend what it is to have a fashionable mamma," said Lettice, very energetically. "Why should I expect to be loved, as your father loves you? Why, my mother scarcely saw me till I was fourteen years of age; I was kept away from her by my nurse, by my governess, by my music masters, and my dancing masters. When I became her companion, Christie, I but became a subject to vent her bad tempers and caprices on—latterly a woman, in her opinion, to be sold off without my own consent to him who bids the highest for me."

"There, you are excited. You do not know what you are saying, Lettice. I am only a new friend—don't tell me any more."

Lettice did not heed the caution, but went on.

"In all my life no one to love me," cried Lettice, dashing the tears hastily from her eyes; "that is my misfortune—a miserable and an unlucky woman, with but one hope, which, to fulfil, will make *her* unhappy. In all my life no mother, then; no sister to share my sorrows, and to teach

me by companionship more gentleness; no brother to advise and strengthen me, and take my part—everything against me!"

Christie had already listened to sundry hints of Lettice's troubles, but she was not prepared for this outburst of grief and confidence. She had not considered that Lettice was an impressionable woman, an impulsive one, till then. Like the rest of the world, she had been deceived a little by the outer calmness or rigidity. She sat astonished now, and puzzled what to say.

"You are deceiving yourself, Lettice," said Christie, at last; "you are making yourself unhappy. I feel sure of it."

"I am not a morbid woman. You do not understand me better than the rest—and I—I thought that you would!"

"I think I do, a little," answered Christie; "but I wonder, now, if you have ever tried to understand your mamma?"

"A child can understand her—read her."

"I am sure that she loves you very much, then," said Christie, "or why did she wish me to be your friend, thinking that our companionship would be a novelty, and interest you?"

"Does that prove that she loves me very deeply?" said Lettice, quickly.

"It proves, at least, that your mother did not think so much of position as of yourself when she wished that we should see each other frequently."

"She wished that?" said Lettice, thoughtfully. "How do you know?"

"My father told me last night. I trust that I have not abused his confidence," replied Christie, beginning to think that she had been a trifle too precipitate.

"If I had known this, I should have disliked you!"

"Why?"

"I don't know. I detest being experimentalized upon. I suppose my mother wished me all of a sudden to become a woman like yourself—very earnest, very amiable, very pious!"

"Ah! now you taunt me," said Christie. "I will go home at once, and wait for your better tempers coming round again."

"No—don't go," cried Lettice eagerly. "I beg your pardon—I *am* rude of speech—I don't always consider what I say. There, perhaps my mother

loves me after all. Can I say fairer than that?"

"Freely forgiven, Lettice; but what a stormy nature yours is!"

"I do not often indulge in this fashion," replied Lettice. "I am very proud of my stoicism —the gravity with which I can endure a stab, Christie. I want a kindred spirit to make me happy—one who could sympathize with all my sorrows, all my joys. A woman like yourself, whom I would compel to understand me, and ask her, from her deeper, purer knowledge, to teach me my duty, and turn me from the wrong path I am pursuing."

"The wrong path?" repeated Christie.

"I feel it is," said Lettice, sorrowfully, "and still it is beyond my power to turn back. You do not know the dark thoughts I entertain—the wicked and unwomanly wretch I am sometimes; and you will never know, because I don't want to be wholly hated here."

She caught Christie to her breast, and kissed her passionately and feverishly; she almost thrust her away from her the instant afterwards, saying,

"Don't speak to me!—don't look at me!"

"You said a little while ago that you had only one hope, the fulfilment of which would render your mother unhappy. I pray you, Lettice, to give up that hope—you will more surely find your happiness elsewhere."

"In heaven, do you mean? I shall never go there!"

"Lettice!—Lettice!—have you gone mad?"

"I can't go there," she said, her face assuming that extra hardness to which we have drawn attention already in these pages, "I have too many bad thoughts. I have conspired against my mother and against myself; I have insulted the dead! There, there, think that I have gone mad," she added; "and now, the madness past, think how sober and stately a woman I am!"

She rose, and walked up and down the drawing-room, with head erect, and grave and measured steps; in an instant all emotion had vanished.

"I meant a happiness on earth——" began Christie, when Lettice checked her.

"I ask you to assist me in my sober mood, and not to attempt to upset it again," she said, coldly; "the subject is dismissed, and you, whose sym-

pathy I have *not*, need not, at least, seek to revive it."

"You have my sympathy."

"For a fortnight," responded Lettice; "you will not let it grow upon you, and do good to me. You will go away next Saturday."

"I must."

"In another fortnight it will strike my mother that we have been too familiar, and that ours is an acquaintance to be dropped—that there is a difference between the etiquette of a watering-place and the rules governing a London season. So you will keep away?"

"Certainly."

"You will not come to Wimbledon—ever?"

"Not if Mrs. Henwood object. How can I?"

"I ask you."

"Lettice," said Christie, suddenly, "I think that your mother's second suggestion will be wiser than the first. Here, if I have helped to make an hour more pleasant, I am glad; but in town, where you and your many friends are a something so utterly different to me and mine, it would only mortify us both to meet too often."

"Meaning that you are anxious to drop me quietly," said Lettice.

"Meaning that I think it better for us both," said Christie.

"Better for you—I know that."

Lettice took a turn or two across the room again, then stopped before Christie, and placed her hands, strong as a man's almost, upon the shoulders of her new-found friend.

"Shall I tell you a secret—more than one?"

"If you think that my advice, or my father's, is worth anything in reply."

"Your father's!—oh! I had forgotten. *You* have no secrets from your parent?"

Christie started, and turned colour.

"I—I hope that I have not. If I have a secret from him, it is, at least, a secret to myself," she said irrelevantly.

"A something that you cannot own—a man you love, perhaps, and whom your father does not."

She did not wait for Christie's answer, but went on again—

"I will not tell you anything," she continued; "it is against my creed to babble of my own regrets. I am a strong-minded woman—it is the ambition of my life to continue so. I will not trust anybody but myself; if I loved a man with

my whole heart, I would not wholly trust him."

"I would."

"For there is no trusting anyone. I would keep back for the future a test of his affection, and try him that way; I would dash a truth in his face, and see if he flinched—I would keep on the watch."

"If I——"

"I will not dwell on this any more," said Lettice; "I am vapid, common-place, and *fine* from this moment. Here is mamma to assist me!"

The door opened as she spoke, and Mrs. Henwood entered the room.

"We have been quite energetic this afternoon, mamma," said Lettice—"talking a great deal of nonsense, though."

"Backbiting me, as usual, Lettice, I daresay," said Mrs. Henwood, a little acrimoniously.

"No—speaking the truth concerning you," was the quick reply—"how kind you have been to allow me Christie for a friend."

"You are glad of that, then?"

"Very glad."

"Position, after all—a high wall to separate

class from class is not the first thing to be studied," said Mrs. Henwood; "and if Miss Wynn, when we are in town, will——"

"Miss Wynn and I have settled all that," interrupted Lettice.

"Oh! very good. Now tell me, both of you, what you think of the set of this *moiré?*"

"Baggy, just a little," said Lettice, drily.

"Great heavens!—baggy!" exclaimed the mother—"where?"

Christie was glad to get home that evening—Lettice had excited and confused her. She confessed in her heart to a growing love for Lettice, and she had a strong desire to be of service to her—to know her sorrows, real or imaginary, and put them, if it were possible, in their best light. She saw clearly enough that Lettice was unhappy, and that she helped, in some degree, to that unhappiness. For the first time in life, Christie had had lately a glimpse of a higher sphere, and it had not filled her with any longing to exchange her own for it. Not for all the world, she thought, would she change places with the heiress, and take her morbid cares, her jealous fretfulness, along with the carriages, jewels, and

fine house. As for giving up her father for Mrs. Henwood, the very thought gave her a shivering fit, that lasted till that father came back from his walking tour.

On the Saturday afternoon, father and daughter went back to London. In the morning of that day they exchanged adieux on the sands with Mrs. Henwood, her daughter and Zach Fernwell.

Mrs. Henwood pitched her tent on one favourite spot when the weather was fine; it was like encamping on the desert, and took a considerably longer time. Martin Wynn knew where to find the Henwood party.

"We shall quite miss you, Mr. Wynn," Mrs. Henwood condescended to assert; "you have become a part of the day."

"Or of the day's amusements," was the response.

"You must not be bitterly disappointed in your failure to make me all that is good and unworldly," she said, laughing very merrily. "You have taken a great deal of trouble with very obstinate materials."

"Yes—very obstinate," assented Martin, with a sad look at her. "It would take a year of

incessant hammering, with solitary confinement for you—or a nice long illness, with a fine prospect of death at the end of it."

"Oh, you dreadful man!" cried the lady. "There, I shall be glad to hear that you have left Yarmouth now."

She shook her curls at him again, and then Martin held her hand for a moment in his own, wished her good-bye, and turned to her daughter. A few words of parting salutation in that quarter.

"Thank you very much for the loan of Christie," said Lettice.

Martin regarded her very attentively; he fancied that he detected a ring of the family satire in her voice.

"You are welcome, Miss Henwood—if you have appreciated the *loan*."

"Am I not all the better for it?" she asked.

"Then thank yourself as well as me," he answered.

He turned to Zach and shook him by the hand also. He fancied that Zach had become white and thin since they had met last; that the face was sterner in its expression, and the expression not exactly what it should have been.

"Do your best," he said in a lower tone—"we are all watching for you—hoping for you."

"Thank you!" murmured Zach.

"Can I deliver any message to a friend?" Martin said in a lower tone still; "that friend is one who will treasure every word."

"That I think of him still," said Zach with a troubled voice; "that I wish him more happiness than I shall ever obtain."

He turned away, and went off at his utmost speed along the sands. Martin looked after him.

"Humph—queer!" he said to himself; "but that sort of feeling will not do him any harm."

Christie parted with Lettice Henwood last of all. They parted, it was observed, not too warmly —Lettice resented Christie's preference for the father's company. Lettice hoped that they would have a safe journey back to London, and then turned away.

Christie stood her ground against Miss Henwood's capriciousness pretty well, but the tears were in her eyes when she had parted from her and was returning with her father to their lodgings.

Martin Wynn saw them, as he saw everything,

and felt angry that his daughter should have been so curtly dismissed.

"If ever I go out of my way again to oblige a parcel of stuck-up people, I shall be a bigger fool than I have been!"

"Still, we obliged them," said Christie; "and Lettice is a very strange girl. I wish that I had known her earlier, or not have liked her quite so much after I had known her."

"That's not a speech up to the mark either," said Martin. "Let us make haste back to home, Mr. Ubbs and Teddy—three things that never change."

In the carriage—a quiet third-class carriage, as befitted these representatives of the people—father and daughter were startled by Lettice Henwood's sudden appearance before them. The train was nearly off, and the guard was anxious to get the fine young lady away, and shut the door.

"Christie," said Lettice, with both hands extended, "kiss me, and don't think any worse of me for my nonsense this morning. I am very sorry to part with you—*you* can't tell how sorry!"

She returned Christie's kiss passionately, then said,

"Why didn't you stay!—oh, why didn't you stay a little while longer, till I could trust you! Whatever happen now—your fault."

"That's Henwood gospel—not ours," said Martin.

"I did not ask for your remarks, sir," cried Lettice rudely. "You take your daughter away, when she might have been of help to me."

She moved aside, and allowed the guard to shut the door, standing on the platform in her rich silk dress, beating a lace parasol impatiently against her skirt. As the whistle sounded, she went once more towards the carriage, heedless of the guard's vociferous shout at her.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Wynn—I was rude. Christie—good-bye! God bless you!"

The train clanked its way from beneath the terminus and went out into the flat country, leaving Lettice Henwood looking after it, as after some hope that she had let escape her.

END OF BOOK THE THIRD.

BOOK IV.

LOSING CASTE.

CHAPTER I.

FOUND OUT.

THE WINTER once again upon the London streets, and London street folk. As cold and merciless a winter as that on which our story opened—a four weeks' frost, come the twentieth of January next, a frost that had nipped to the very heart of the people. The people were suffering that keen winter time, suffering by wholesale. Not all the money sent in by liberal hands to all the refuges that asked for charity in the columns of the daily press; not all the money collected by the parishes for that indoor and out relief, which ever seems so grudgingly bestowed; not all the efforts of liberal men, dispensing their own alms, and making no show, seemed to take one haggard wretch the less from London streets, or save one from dying in them.

A woman being whirled westward in her carriage

and pair, a woman who objected to poor people, and knew nothing about them, and did not want to know, seemed suffering from the weather with those less fortunate than-she, on that day verging on the twentieth of the new year. This woman might have been at Torquay luxuriating in a middle climate, or at Hastings, Ventnor, her favourite Paris, anywhere. Business got on well without her, and London was objectionable, and intensely cold; there seemed no occasion to be in town for a lady of this class, one whom the frost seemed to affect even in her air-tight carriage, with a foot-warmer at the bottom thereof. She was blue with cold, and she sat with her teeth chattering, heaped in a cushioned corner, her arms buried in her sable muff, and herself weighed down by sables, a picture far from exhilirating. The coachman on the box freezing rapidly as he drove, and the rigid footman hanging on behind, all goose-flesh, were cheerful mortals by comparison; but then there was no frost in the system of those two.

The equipage was driven to Griffin Street, Tottenham Court Road, and stopped before the house of Martin Wynn. The footman, glad of a

respite from the cold, leaped down and endeavoured to restore the circulation of his blood by an extra application to the knocker, alarming the whole of Griffin Street in consequence.

A tall young man with a wiry head of hair responded.

"I wouldn't excite myself any more than I could help, if I were you!" said Teddy. "What is the matter?"

"Is Mr. Wynn in, or——"

"No, he is not. If you have brought a message from Mr. Braddleton——"

"Which I haven't, my good person," said the footman, interrupting in his turn, "if you'll be ke-ind enough to let me speak!"

"Look sharp, then, I'm in a hurry, and wasting time. I never waste time. Here, will you speak to the servant?"

Teddy was about to retire into the room on his right, and leave the footman to the maid-servant, coming up from the lower regions with a vacant expression of countenance, when a hand beat impatiently against the glass of the carriage window, and a face which Teddy recognized looked through at him.

Teddy coloured, and felt alarmed. Mrs. Henwood at that house in Griffin Street! What did it mean, he wondered? The footman approached the carriage, and Mrs. Henwood lowered the glass.

"Mr. Wynn is out, ma'am," said the footman.

"No matter."

The door was opened, and the carriage steps were lowered. Mrs. Henwood descended, crossed the pavement towards the house, and was met by the same piece of information on the door-step.

"Mr. Wynn is out, ma'am."

"I will see his daughter."

"Miss Wynn is out, ma'am."

"I will wait."

Teddy Fernwell made room for his visitor, and was proceeding to show the way upstairs, when Mrs. Henwood brought him to a halt again.

"I will go in here."

"This is our workshop, Mrs. Henwood," said Teddy.

"It is a front room, and I can see the carriage, and give orders to my coachman if required," she said. "I prefer to rest here."

"Very well."

Teddy was a little confused; he objected to this

determination, but not being ready with a method to change it, he led the way into the workshop. Mrs. Henwood steered her way through a room encumbered with a bench by the window, by tools and slips of wood, and half-finished articles of work, to the chair which was fortunately there, and which Teddy had wheeled close to the fire, whereon a glue-pot was simmering.

"You will excuse the litter, Mrs. Henwood," said Teddy, apologetically; "and you really will find the drawing-room more convenient. Its windows look upon the street also."

"I said that I would stop here, young man," she replied, taking her seat, and, despite her former assertion, turning her back completely upon the window. "Go on with your work, and do not mind me."

Teddy mounted his stool, and relapsed into an attentive posture over his veneering. Mrs. Henwood set her muff aside, and crouched forwards over the fire, her thin hands spread out, gloved though they were, towards the blaze there. No study of posture, no set ease, no woman trained to the right angle then, but a thoughtful woman bent forwards in a witch-like attitude, that was

utterly devoid of grace, and staring at Teddy's glue-pot as though it was the cauldron whence strange things might issue.

Teddy tried to settle himself to his veneering, but he could not; he was distressed by a myriad of thoughts as to the reason of Mrs. Henwood's presence there; he could but attribute it to danger—danger to Zach, perhaps. She had not come to give Martin an order for another cabinet, to inquire concerning Martin or Christie's health, or she would have never looked like that. Her voice was harsher than its wont, also; Teddy had only heard it once, but he was sure of it!

"How long will Mr. Wynn be away?"

"It is impossible to say, ma'am," answered Teddy; "half an hour—an hour—perhaps longer. If you would be kind enough to leave word when you will call again, it might be more convenient to you."

"It might," was the response, but Mrs. Henwood made no effort to rise.

"Miss Wynn is out for the day—something about the chapel, I believe."

"I do not wish to see Miss Wynn."

"And——"

"Will you go on with your work, and take no notice of me, please?"

Teddy succumbed to this reproof; he had been anxious to get rid of that figure which embarrassed him; he was almost fearful that by some strange instinct the lady sitting there would find him out. Once the idea seized him that she had come there to unmask him, when looking askance at her over his work five minutes afterwards, he noticed that she had changed her position, and that the light brown eyes were fixed intently upon his face.

"I—I beg your pardon," he stammered in his confusion, "you spoke?"

"Not a word."

She continued to look at him, he felt assured; he writhed uneasily on his stool; a cold perspiration broke out upon his forehead; it was all very strange, he thought, for he was not a coward.

Mrs. Henwood spoke to him presently; when he was trying his hardest to forget her, and mustering courage to attempt a whistle in a subdued tone, by way of cheering himself over his marqueterie.

"Take this vile smelling thing from the fire!" pointing to the glue-pot; "it is abominable."

Teddy left his seat and complied with Mrs. Henwood's request. When he was back in his place, she looked at him again.

"You are the man subject to fits?" she asked, inspecting him through her eye-glass for an instant; "the man who came to Wimbledon?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"You helped to finish the cabinet, I understand?"

Teddy nodded.

"You are a clever man in your trade, no doubt?"

Teddy laughed.

"I earn my living, and a few in the trade like my work. I have Mr. Wynn to thank, for all that."

"Is he a good master—now?"

"The best of masters—as he is the kindest of men, madam!" cried Teddy enthusiastically, as he warmed to his subject; "only those who live with him, who see him every day, can understand how truly good he is."

"Would you like a place—supposing that I could obtain you one—under Mr. Braddleton of Park Lane? To do all that he requires—and

carry out all that he commands—for twice the pay you obtain here?"

"I shall never leave here, madam," replied Teddy; "I am a fixture here—working my best for Martin Wynn, until it pleases him to get tired of me."

"You live here?"

"No—over the water."

"What is your name?"

Teddy was nonplussed by the inquiry. He had said too much; he had been drawn out, and now he must tell a lie. Well, it was for Zach's sake again; he did not remember ever telling a lie for his own, since he was rescued from Drag's Court.

"Edward Thankful," he said, on the spur of the moment.

"That's a strange name," she replied; "go on with your work. Your master will not be thankful to me for the time of which you have robbed him."

She turned her back completely upon him now; taking pains to screw her chair round for that purpose, and doing it with an angry movement even. She sat glancing at the fire, with a countenance the reverse of everything amiable—the face of Mrs. Henwood at her worst. Teddy

fancied after a while that she must have fallen asleep, she remained so still there, so entirely forgetful of the feelings of her servants, and of her horses blocking up three-fourths of the roadway, which was of narrow dimensions in Griffin Street. The coachman and footman were side by side upon the box now, grumbling about their places together, and huddled against each other for warmth, like two of the monkey tribe. Blest if they'd been paid for freezing there hours and hours, and getting their complexions purple! They were worth their money anywhere, and Mrs. Henwood would receive due warning when she was back again in Wimbledon. From their icebergs they could envy the baked-potato man at the corner of the street; and in their desperation at last they took it in turns to leave the box and run to the "George," and have something warm with peppermint in it every quarter of an hour, thus rendering it doubtful, if Mrs. Henwood spent much longer time in Griffin Street, whether her coachman would be able to see his way home.

Martin Wynn reached Griffin Street at last, not surprised very much at the carriage before his doors—for there were stately visitors to see

Martin's work at times—and having no suspicion of the lady who had favoured him with her company, until he had let himself in with his latch-key, and was standing in the workshop looking at her.

"Mrs. Henwood!" he exclaimed—"this is a great honour, stepping from your position to mine like this!"

Mrs. Henwood answered him sharply enough, for she had become tired of waiting there, and was very irritable that morning.

"Have you not forgotten that talk of position yet?" she said; "you bear ill-will against my pride, I see."

"I bear ill-will against no man or woman," answered Martin; "it was a joke of mine—that's all."

"I am not in a humour for jokes."

"Sorry to hear that," replied Martin—"a joke's a good thing, when it's a fair and true one, and has a good effect on others."

"Yours was a bad joke—an ill-timed one—very."

"Well," with a fillip to his ear, "perhaps it was. I make a blunder occasionally; and," he

added, in a different tone, "if you are in trouble, I am very sorry to fling a jest at you."

"I am in trouble, Martin Wynn. I have come to ask your advice."

"Mine?"

"Ah! it is very odd," she said, more to herself than Martin, and exhibiting, as she spoke, a touch of that old conceit, against which Martin had good-humouredly winged a shaft, "that out of all my friends, my grand connections, my legal, medical, business, and confidential advisers, I should come to you."

"It *is* odd," he assented; "will you step upstairs, please?"

Mrs. Henwood followed Martin Wynn to the room on the first-floor, sat down face to face with him before the fire that had been kept up there awaiting his return. Martin Wynn looked closely at the face of the patroness—yes, it was not the face that he had noticed at Yarmouth, or at Wimbledon—it was, so to speak, a *tired* face, shorn of the affectation which had become almost natural to its expression, and for the first time in his experience quite destitute of COLOUR.

"In trouble?" said Martin Wynn, echoing her past words, when they were seated thus—"I am sorry to hear it."

"You are not surprised, then?"

"Trouble comes to great houses as to small ones," said Martin—"sometimes the greatest of trouble to the largest house. It is fair. You do not expect in this life all your own way?"

"Nor in the other."

"In the other——"

"Oh! I have not come here to talk about another world—that's a more favourite topic with you than me, I'm sure. I haven't waited all these hours for that, and been nearly poisoned, also, with the smell of glue. What do you want away from home?" she cried, peevishly.

"Business took me away," said Martin; "Stanley and Burns cannot always get on without me, and I never turn my back on a fair stroke of work. But—in trouble," he added, recurring to the one theme on which it seemed necessary to dwell—"well, what can *I* do to alleviate it?"

"Nothing."

"But you come—" began Martin, when she con-

cluded, with a vehemence and a fierceness that were new in her,

"—To reproach you."

"Indeed!" was the surprised reply.

"To reproach you for advising me nine years ago, nearly, to adopt my sister's child, and save him from the moral ruin which seemed threatening him—you, man, advising me to my own disgrace!"

"No, no—I hope not. Not so bad as that—speak more coolly, Mrs. Henwood, and then I shall understand you better. What has happened?"

"That wretch whom I have fostered—whom you thrust upon me against the instinct that should have taught me better than your words—that child with the bad blood in him, that *must* make him bad, has set my daughter against me, won from her the little affection that she ever had, taught her to look to him before me, the world, and everything! I have found them out!"

"Surely they do not love each other?" exclaimed Martin.

"They think they do," said Mrs. Henwood; "he has studied the eccentricities of Lettice,

mastered her nature, made her almost his slave. That girl would be proud to be his victim, and become that man's wife. This is the old story of nursing the viper till it stings one."

"How long has this been going on?"

"Ask them that. I cannot tell you."

"Neither Zach to confess to you his passion—nor your own daughter," said Martin, sadly; "yes; this is a great trouble."

"And a great disgrace."

"Your own nephew!" commented Martin.

"The son of a vagabond, a thief, a convict."

"That's looking at the worst of everything," said Martin, in a more cheerful tone.

"Why don't you tell me what to do?" she cried, in fretful tones; "and not try to console me. I haven't come all this way for consolation—there is not any."

"In the first place, Mrs. Henwood, what does your daughter say?"

"That she is engaged to Zachary Fernwell, is old enough to know her own mind, and to see where her happiness lies, and all that ridiculous rhodomontade—that having given her word to love him, she will keep firm against every wish of mine.

Oh!" with a sorrowful wail, that touched Martin, "to live to see my own daughter turn against me thus!"

"Patience! And this Zach?"

"Talks like a book—like fifty books—about his attachment too. I told him last night that I would ruin him—that I would cast him back to the dregs of that society from which I rescued him—and then he—he—he almost defied me, telling me that it was beyond my power, and wishing to reason with me about his influence at the wharf, as if I could hear reason after that! I will never forgive them both—if I could have found a Bible anywhere about the house, I would have sworn it to their two false faces."

"I would not talk like this, madam," reproved Martin; "no good can arise from it—all this kind of talk is nonsense."

"Is it? We shall see!"

"I don't know exactly what is to be done," said Martin, with his characteristic fillip to his ear again; "in your place, I would make the best of it."

"Letting this viper marry my child?"

"Not if I could help it," answered Martin.

"There—I am glad I have come—you side with

me in this—you see the unsuitableness, the wickedness of the match?"

"I see, Mrs. Henwood, a young man acting a deceitful part against you—scheming against your hopes, that should have been very sacred to him—I see but little honour in him, and much ingratitude. Such a man will not make your daughter a good husband."

"And I had found an excellent match for her—oh! dear!"

"Not forced it upon her, or driven her by your persistence the wrong way?"

"She has not even that excuse."

"You want my advice?" asked Wynn.

"You are a thoughtful man. I think that you are a good one. But I don't know," she said, despairingly, "the little confidence I had seems wearing out."

"I would, in your place, reason with Lettice—appeal to her love and duty—ask her to wait patiently even, and not precipitately rush on to her own unhappiness. I would speak to her like—a mother!"

"I have been the most indulgent of mothers all my life."

Martin doubted this, but did not contradict her.

"It is all your fault, too, Mr. Wynn," she whimpered; "you preached me into taking him—you thought it would be for the best."

"It should have been, had he been less devoid of principle; had he—who was his tutor?"

"Mr. Clevelly—a man from Oxford, with fifty references from the nobility."

"A religious man?"

"I don't know—what is that to do with it?"

"A great deal," said Martin. "Zach has sunk suddenly and deeply for want of a good foundation. A Christian man is as strong as the faith that gives strength to him."

"You would have brought him up differently?" asked Mr. Henwood.

"Very differently. In a more humble fashion—with less book learning, and less care for the world."

"He would have deceived you, when it suited his purpose—when it would have advanced him one step."

"Not he."

"Look to your own protegée," cried Mrs. Henwood, flying off into fresh excitement again, and

springing to her feet to give more power to her warning; "look to my viper's brother, whom *you* have adopted—he has the same bad blood in him, and will turn against you as surely as the world stands! I see it in his face—and I see in the future that you will live to rue the day you ever tried to save him from the streets. All bad, these Fernwells—every one as full of evil as it is possible. Martin Wynn, you're time will come, as I'm a living woman!"

"No, no," said Martin, hastily; "he of whom you speak would lay down his life for me before he would deceive me."

"Look to him—look to him," she repeated twice, "you will be glad to eat your words some day. Why, you, man, have a daughter too, and yet you trust a son of the devil who first disgraced us."

"Yes—I trust him. I wish you knew him, Mrs. Henwood."

"I hope I may die whenever I seek another Fernwell out!" she cried. "Great heaven! would you thrust this man upon me too?"

"No," answered Martin, "I keep this man, and I pledge my faith in him. But may I ask

how you became possessed of the knowledge of his name?"

"You showed me a secret drawer in my own cabinet—and that was the clue to the secret drawer in yours."

"Confound my stupidity!" exclaimed Martin; "why, of course it was, and you discovered the names of the workers—all the names that good Mr. Braddleton would have kept in the dark. Well, that junior workman—that Teddy Fern—"

"I will NOT hear about him!" interposed Mrs. Henwood, hurrying to the door, "I will not listen to a word in his favour—I hate him—I hate you for mentioning him! Let me go away from this place—what good advice could I have expected to find here?" she added ungratefully.

"I wish I could advise you further," replied Martin; "I will think seriously of all this, and let you know."

"Don't take the trouble, please. Very kind of you, Mr. Wynn, but scarcely worth the walk to Wimbledon. I have made up my mind."

"And——"

"And that is all I can tell you," she replied. "I would act like a mother if I had a daughter

who loved me—a daughter worthy of the name, which I haven't—which I never, never, never shall have now."

The proud, hard, wilful, narrow-minded woman broke down utterly at last, and leaned against the door to which she had walked, sobbing very bitterly. Martin offered her his arm with a gentleness and courtesy that she remembered afterwards—not then.

"Let me lead you to your carriage, Mrs. Henwood," he said; "you will be better at home, thinking quietly and *seriously* of all this. Indeed, I am very sorry."

She took his arm mechanically, and they went out of the room and down the stairs together, the woman very feeble, the man careful of her every step.

In the passage Teddy appeared for an instant, and went back into the room in haste, as her eyes flashed at him, and he was waved—almost imperiously—from her path.

Out of the narrow hall into the street, Martin opening the carriage-door, and assisting her into her seat, and over the foot-warmer—cold as a stone now.

"Indeed, I am very sorry," he said again before he left her; but she did not respond—even turned her head away from him.

The footman was at the door in his place as if by magic.

"Where to, ma'am?"

"Home—as fast as you can!"

The carrriage and horses that had stopped the way in Griffin Street moved on at last, leaving Martin Wynn, bareheaded at the door, looking sorrowfully after them.

CHAPTER II.

TEDDY'S CONFESSION.

TEDDY FERNWELL was working with extra energy to make up for lost time when Martin came back to the workshop. Teddy glanced up, exchanged a smile with the true friend, and then applied himself to his work again. Teddy was anxious to know the reason for Mrs. Henwood's visit there, and whether her coming affected his brother Zach, but he would not betray his curiosity. His master might have been sworn to secrecy, or might think it best not to disturb the pupil set ever apart from the brother. But Teddy was very anxious about Zach—fearful that Zach had emperilled, in some way, and despite all his care, that position to which he had attained.

Martin Wynn went close to the bench, and looked on at Teddy's work—a piece of marqueterie for a table-top; and then looked at Teddy,

and thought of Mrs. Henwood's prophecy, which was troubling him, despite his common sense.

"He has the same bad blood in him, and will turn against you as sure as the world stands!"

She uttered her foreboding with due emphasis—like a woman inspired. If he had been a nervous man, it might have made him suspicious of this elder brother, she had spoken with such firm conviction of the truth of her prophecy. But to look at his pupil was to erase by degrees the impression that Mrs. Henwood had left behind her; Martin could not look at that man's face, frank, earnest, and intelligent as it was, and not believe in Teddy's regeneration. In all Teddy's acts of life a disinterestedness, an anxiety to show his gratitude, which there was no capability of feigning. If he had had a doubt of him—which he had not—Martin Wynn would have lost it watching Teddy at his work.

"Teddy," he said, "I am giving up all my old conceit. You beat me with my own weapons."

"No, sir," replied Teddy, laughing, "not half so bad as that."

"So bad, eh?" said Martin; "that's a queer remark. But you have not been working with

your usual expedition, and at least I have a good excuse for scolding."

"She put me out," replied Teddy. "I could not work comfortably with Mrs. Henwood staring at me, and asking all kinds of questions."

"Why did you not show her upstairs?"

"Bless you, sir, she wouldn't go!"

"What questions were they, Teddy?"

"Whether I would like a place under Mr. Braddleton's inspection—double the pay, and so on. As if I would leave Griffin Street to find my fortune round the corner, sir!"

"Why not?" asked Martin.

"You needn't ask me that," replied Teddy; "you know why I shall always stay here, helping you—until I cannot be of help any longer. I don't think," with a vehement shake to his head, "that *that* needs any explanation!"

"Well—I don't think it requires any, Teddy."

He let his hand fall upon the shoulder of his pupil and remain there. Something in the words, something in the action, disturbed Teddy's application to his work; he looked up very quickly.

"Bad news?" he interrogated.

"Yes—bad news!"

"Zach! I know it's about Zach, sir!"

"Yes—about Zach!" he assented again.

Teddy pushed his work completely aside, and turned round on his high stool till he was face to face with his employer. Teddy was flushed and excited; his wiry black hair seemed bristling up with greater energy, and his eyes were dilating with the fear of a coming revelation.

"Go on, please—go on," he said, with eagerness.

"It is not very long ago, Teddy," Martin began, "since I told you that you would live to be ashamed of your brother—if I have brought you up well, which I think I have—you will blush for him this day."

"Oh! sir, he—he—hasn't taken anything?"

"Yes—he has."

"My God!—to think that he should! To think that after all these years he could not keep honest!"

"He has taken advantage of Mrs. Henwood's confidence," explained Martin; "he has taken advantage of his place in that house to make love to Mrs. Henwood's daughter—to win her affections to himself, and set her, as by a natural result, against the mother. He has been a coward, a spy, and a knave!"

"But he hasn't taken any money, then?"

"I consider that he has done worse than that—he has certainly done much more to set Mrs. Henwood against him, and prove the craftiness and meanness of his nature. Why, there cannot be any good in this man!"

Teddy clasped his hands and wrung them tightly together. From the height of his stool he looked down at the floor, grieved and discomfited.

"*You* cannot see any good in him after this, Teddy?" said Martin.

"I don't know. He might have loved the girl very much," stammered Teddy.

"He should have told Mrs. Henwood so—he should at least have put upon her guard the woman who had done so much for him! A man with a spark of honour in him would not have hesitated."

"Why should he pain her?" said Teddy, taking up his brother's defence more warmly. "He might have known how hopeless it all was, and fancied that the better plan was to keep his love hidden, preying only on himself. He might have seen that it was impossible to marry her, and have tried very hard to have lived without her, doing his duty just as well

to the one he served. I think so, at all events," he added.

"Ah! it might have been very easy to deceive himself after this fashion, I daresay," answered Martin; "but he would have been none the less a coward, playing a false part to her who raised him in the world. And, Teddy, he did not keep his passion to himself, but overpowered a foolish girl with it; there he was the knave!"

"He was wrong there," said Teddy, slowly, still looking at the floor.

"I say," cried Martin, with some force, "that he was altogether wrong—that from the beginning to the end I cannot see an excuse for him. I am very sorry now that any words of mine should have helped to place him in a higher sphere than he deserved; better for him if you had not come to defend him on that night I saw you first!"

Teddy cowered more at this. He had done evil on that day that good might come of it; and evil had arisen, as was natural. The sin of that day was unconfessed—must ever remain so, for Zach's sake and his own—and that unselfish sin ever weighed upon him, holding him down.

"Don't say better for him," urged Teddy,

mournfully; "he was weak, sir, and might have gone back to the streets, with never a spark of good to keep a soul in him. I will ask you, sir, not to say better for him, if I had not come, when he might have fallen, oh! so much lower!"

"Teddy, I don't see how much lower he could have fallen. He might have been a thief—he is a thief now."

"You—you are hard upon him."

"And he might have been still in Upper Ground Street, or here by your side, working with you, as honest and unselfish as yourself."

"He would have found better teaching here than in the big house," replied Teddy. "I think, if he had stayed *here*, perhaps—but oh! I can't say—I don't know."

He leaped off the stool, and began to pace up and down the room, his hands clasping and unclasping, his breath coming short and quick. Martin regarded him with surprise.

"Why should you feel this so acutely, Teddy?" he asked, when his pupil's perambulations appeared to increase rather than diminish.

"I will tell you, Mr. Wynn. Give me time to find my breath."

Martin was amazed, but he waited patiently, keeping his watch upon Teddy, who seemed long in discovering that article he sought, and to be taking eccentric methods to facilitate the discovery. Martin would not intrude again by any remark; he took up the thin slip of veneer on the bench, and affected to inspect the work; he waited very anxiously now for Teddy Fernwell's next words. From the background, vague and misty, was there advancing anything to scare *him* in his turn? He almost feared so; he was sure so when Teddy suddenly snatched the work from his hand, cast it on the floor, and set his foot upon it.

"Don't look at it, sir—don't touch it—it is the work of a COWARD!"

At the last word Martin Wynn understood all; the whole truth flashed upon him before another syllable had escaped the lips of the excited man confronting him.

"I hope not," he answered.

"Yes, sir—a coward. Acting as Zach has acted, following his steps, as by some evil rule which governed both of us, I see now the coward that I have been. I was afraid to tell you—I thought that I could live and die, and keep my

secret till to-day, but it wasn't fair. I see it now."

He walked to a corner of the room, struggled into his great-coat, and seized his hat.

"Where are you going?" asked Martin.

"I am going home—I am going away."

"For good?"

"Yes, sir—for good. For the good of you and —*her*."

"Not just yet. Stay a minute or two, and let us understand each other better. This is a matter not to be dashed at in a hurry."

"Mr. Wynn, I would rather go now. I have explained—the rest you can understand."

"May I ask you, as a favour to me, to sit down?"

He pointed to the chair which Mrs. Henwood had vacated. Hat in hand, Teddy dropped into it at his request; Martin took a seat near him—both men were very pale now.

"To think that you, of all men whom I trusted, could not have told me this before!" Martin said, reproachfully.

"I was afraid."

"Ah! then, you *were* a coward!" said Martin—"and it had been my pride to think that I had

made you, with God's help, so brave and good a man!"

"Brave to fight the world, sir, I hope, but not to fight against my love for Christie."

"Hush, hush!—if she heard you!—if she should have come home!—if she only knew! Teddy," he said, suddenly, and with a fierceness that he had not exhibited hitherto, "don't tell me that she knows!"

"Not so bad as that, sir. I would have rather died—I would have rather gone back to Drag's Court, and begun the old life from the fever-time —than let her know it."

"That's well," said Martin, with a sigh of relief.

"I have tried very hard to keep all this to myself—I knew how far away she was from me—I would not so disgrace her as to make her my wife, if she, and you, and all the world could have been so foolish as to ask me; and I thought it right, in my weak judgment of what *is* right, to keep it to myself till this day. But I could not help loving Christie, for she helped to save me; she was ever like a sister, and I could not know her and not love her, sir. Very much to blame, but I could not help myself—and more to blame

in not telling you this earlier; but then I was afraid of *your* unhappiness!"

"Honestly said, at least," murmured Martin.

"No, sir, I am not honest," said Teddy, catching quickly at the words; "there you misjudge me. I am false!"

Martin thought that he alluded to the same subject which had distressed them both, but Teddy was thinking of all that had placed him there, and of the lie that he had told for Zach. For Zach's sake, and Zach's chance, he held his peace still; he would not have shrunk back for himself, even though it cast him further away from Martin Wynn—for ever away from him. Better, perhaps, if he had confessed all in that hour of contrition—better for the future stealing up towards him.

"Honestly said," repeated Martin; "what are your next intentions?"

"I will go back to Upper Ground Street."

"You will do nothing desperate—you are not a rash man."

"I hope not."

"What do you really think of doing, then?" said Martin.

"I will find another berth, and keep ever away

from this place, thinking of you and her, sir, first of all—always! I will take care of the old man, and his daughter, if they'll let me, after I have told them what a coward I have been."

"Tell them nothing, if you please," said Martin; "it would not be fair to me to let this foolish story go further—not just to Christie."

"I will be silent, then, sir."

"Very good."

"I will go to Stanley and Burns' at once—I may get on there, and they may never know at Upper Ground Street that I've left you."

"Just as you please."

Martin looked away, full of thought still. He was perplexed; he did not see his way; for once his clearsightedness was at fault. He did not ask Teddy to remain any longer, and the old servant—the old and faithful servant that Martin had considered him—got up and went rapidly out of the room, murmuring,

"Good-bye, sir."

Martin did not answer; he did not know that Teddy had gone till he heard the street-door close behind him.

CHAPTER III.

TEDDY'S MISSION.

TEDDY returned home to Upper Ground Street at the usual time, to a casual observer almost in his usual spirits. What he had been doing in the interim no one never knew but Teddy; what grief, remorse, passionate abandonment, or desperate and stubborn fight with himself, was never told to the world, and can only be guessed at in these pages. His had been a life of repression—of keeping something back!—and, to casual observers, be it repeated again, he came home that night *almost* in his usual spirits. But to observers who were not casual, there was a difference in him; and Polly Wynn and her father—coming of a sharp, observant family—saw the difference, and began to hazard a few remarks concerning it.

"All right in Griffin Street, I hope?" remarked the watchman.

"Everything right there, of course," said Teddy, caressing Speck, now as aged and time-worn as his master, and about as fit for service.

"That's comfortable hearing. I fancied that you looked a trifle down—that's why I asked."

Teddy took up the poker, and began to hammer away at the coals.

"Bless the lad, don't waste the coals like that!" said the more prudent Polly; "how you are battering away, to be sure!"

"All right," said Teddy; "I thought a flare would cheer us, and warm us. How cold it is to-night, Miss Polly!"

"Father thinks that the frost is breaking up this evening."

"It's on the move at last," said the old man, "and glad enough we are of it, Speck and I. It changed at half-past four. It has cut hard enough lately—in the night, and just before the dawn on the wharf especially."

"Ah! enough to cut you in half, I know," commented Teddy, "and why you stand against it, I don't see any more than Mr. Martin."

"I can't be beholden to Martin for *my* living," observed Mr. Wynn.

"I'd ask for my pension."

"It would break my heart if they offered it me whilst I was of any use. And, lor! bless you, Teddy, I'm as much use there as ever I was. What are you thinking about now?"

"Who—I?" said Teddy with a start; "oh! about the comfort this thaw will be to those who can't afford to buy coals. Pooh! it is warm to-night," and he pushed his chair away from the fire into the shadow of the room.

The old watchman noticed the movement, but said nothing till he was ready to depart. Then he came up to Teddy, and stared into his face.

"You are quite sure that there's nothing wrong in Griffin Street, and you're trying to keep it away from me?"

"Nothing wrong there, sir—why, I would tell you in a moment."

"And nothing wrong with you?"

"With me!—ha! ha!—that's a good joke!"

"Because, if there was, I wouldn't mind you coming to my wharf to talk it over. I wouldn't mind giving you the best advice in my power—because you've been a good young fellow, trying to do good where you could."

"Oh! that's all nonsense. We shall want better spectacles than yours, sir, to see the good in me!"

"They don't say that in this house—not from the top floor to the bottom—they don't say it in Upper Ground Street—anywheres."

"They don't know what they're saying," laughed Teddy. "Good night, sir."

"Good night."

Mr. Wynn, senior, was scarcely out of the house, before Polly, as anxious as her father, dropped to a seat by his side.

"You've done it very well, Teddy, but we see through it here. What is it?"

"Nothing!" was the moody answer.

"Nothing of any consequence, I know," was the cheerful reply; "but a something that seems to you black enough, until we think it over, and rake out all the nonsense in it. Won't you tell *me?*" and Polly's round little eyes were full of astonishment at the mere idea of Teddy's reticence.

"It's a something that I can't tell you now," answered Teddy, thus appealed to, "which I wish that I could—for if any one could brighten up a fellow, why, it's you!"

"Why won't you tell me?"

"I promised not."

"Nothing *against* you? Oh! I'm as sure of that as——"

"I've been afraid of the truth—and I've been weak and foolish," said Teddy, quickly. "Don't ask for any better explanation from me, or Martin, or any one, than that. It will all come round in time—everything fair and square enough—I pray for that."

"You and Martin have had a quarrel?"

"It takes two to make a quarrel. We shall not quarrel, he and I. I would as soon quarrel with you, or the Bible!"

"Then I won't worry you, if it's a promise," she said; "but it's right enough in the end—right and bright enough, and round it will come, just as you say. All these things come round beautifully, if we have the patience to wait."

"Surely," answered Teddy, "and I'll grow patient like you. With you for my example, I've nothing to fear!" he said, more stoutly.

"I should think not!"

Teddy stood up, and straightened himself. A stalwart man enough, who could hold his ground, he seemed, and Polly thought so, at that time.

"I am likely to be back late to-night," he said. "I shall take the key, and not disturb you."

"I sit up late, Teddy," said Polly; "but there's the key, if you wish it."

"Thank you."

Teddy departed. He went swiftly out of Upper Ground Street towards the Waterloo Road, proceeding from Waterloo Road to London Road, and the "Elephant and Castle." He was always a fast walker, but his pace that night attracted the attention of foot-passengers, who looked after him, and who inquired, a few of them against whom he came in contact, "where he was running to?"

There was no hesitation in his thoughts, which were made up, evidently. It was a motive as resolute as his progress that took him to Zach's lodgings in the New Kent Road—to the address which he had obtained in some way, being resolved, for good or evil, not to wholly lose sight of his younger and weaker brother.

A pretty girl, with a painful waist, opened the door, and waited for him to state his business.

"Is Mr. Fernwell within?—Mr. Henwood, I should say?" he corrected.

"No, he isn't. Mr. Henwood seldom gets back

on week days so early as this. Will you leave your name, or a message?"

"I will call again."

He went away, returning in an hour's time to receive the same news of Mr. Henwood's absence. At the expiration of another hour he called again.

"Mr. Henwood's at home, but very busy. Will you mention your business to me?"

"To you? Certainly not!"

"Mr. Henwood would not be very much alarmed at your confidence," Miss Evvers said with a toss of her head. "You must send up your name, then."

"Teddy."

Arabella looked hard at the speaker, but departed upstairs with the message, to return in a few minutes with the information that Mr. Henwood would see him.

"The front room, I suppose?" said Teddy.

"I'll show you."

"Oh! I needn't trouble you."

"It's no trouble to me," said Arabella, which indeed it was not. She was glad of all excuses to open that drawing-room door when Zachary Fernwell was at home. She had based many hopes on

Zachary, as she had on other junior lodgers in her day, young as she was, but never so earnestly, and with so much heart in her hopes.

Teddy was ushered into the sitting-room, where his brother awaited him—his brother, pale, and anxious-looking, with his soul—that is, his business soul—in his face.

"Mr. Teddee!" said Miss Evvers.

Zach bowed his head gravely and formally, until the girl had quitted the room; then he turned to Teddy, standing there, and wistfully regarding him.

"What is the matter? What can bring you here?"

"Very bad news of you—or very good news of me, that *you* would be glad even to hear—would bring me always here, despite any wishes to the contrary."

"Sit down," said Zachary; "I suppose the bad news is the motive force on this occasion?"

"The bad news—yes."

"Bad news that you have heard of me, Teddy?" he asked, scornfully.

"Bad news for the two of us."

"Indeed!"

Teddy took the seat that his brother had indicated; the chilliness of his reception did not daunt him much. This new brother he was beginning to understand, and he intruded on that brother's world, knowing what his reception would be beforehand. All this he might expect, and for all he was prepared.

"Ill and worn again, Zach! I think you work too hard," he said.

"We must all work hard, if we wish to live—and keep our place."

"And yours is in danger?"

"Ha!—who told you that?"

"It is no secret. Mrs. Henwood is aware of the whole truth."

"And Mrs. Henwood has been to Martin Wynn's. Well, that is news worth bringing to me—that puts me on my guard."

"I did not come with that object," said Teddy, quickly, "although I am here to be of help to you if I can, and if my way suits you."

"Your way, Teddy?" answered Zach, with more brotherly warmth.

It may have been noted that after a while this strange, selfish young man, always thawed a little

beneath Teddy's more genial nature, and the rule held good on this occasion.

"I will explain."

Teddy drew his chair close to the fire, over which Zach had been brooding when his brother was announced.

"Zach," he said, "I know all about this—this love affair."

"I suppose so."

"That you could not keep your love to yourself, but that it betrayed you, and set Mrs. Henwood against you. I will not say anything about the wrong of it—I have not heard the whole story, and it does not matter to my purpose—but fearing for you, I come to offer my help."

"I must help myself. By my own actions, Teddy, I must stand or fall."

"You will fall, I think," observed the brother.

"I do not think so," answered Zach, more warmly—"I am not a tool. I am not a servant to be dismissed at a moment's warning—I have power in my hands, and I can use it. Fall—no, I will *not* fall!"

"I am glad to hear that."

Teddy's manner changed. His congratulations

were scarcely sincere, or his sorrowful face belied his words. Zach was somewhat curious.

"How would you have helped me?" he asked.

"Just listen. I have left Martin Wynn."

"You?—why, there is nothing wrong in you, I hope?" Zach exclaimed. And he did hope that, for an inexplicable reason, or a reason that jarred with his selfish thoughts, and that he could not explain.

"I have not acted as I ought to have done," Teddy answered, gloomily, "and I have withdrawn from the truest friend I ever met—not in anger, but, at least, in sorrow. Now, Zach, I have a good trade at my finger-ends, and I have managed to save two hundred pounds."

"Well?" asked Zach, almost nervously.

"I have been trying very hard to save; when I understood my work the money came in pretty well for a single man with no ambitions, and it has always struck me that there would come a time when I could assist you. If that woman casts you off—and I think she will, I say again—then let you and me begin life together, working for each other. We are not perfect beings, but by our past experience we may show our doubters

that we were not so bad and black as they believed. Zach, my one ambition is to take care of you!"

Through the crust of selfism that had grown and hardened round Zachary in his latter days, pierced the earnest words of the brother. Zach was touched—more, he was deeply moved.

"No, no!" he cried, with horror in his looks—"if I fell never so deeply, I could not come to you for help, after all that has passed, and after all that I have done to show you what an unnatural fellow I am. Not such a thief as that, Teddy—let me fall alone, to the very bottom of the abyss, before I ask you to support me!"

"We are children of one mother. Cast adrift, Zach—who is to help you?"

"My wits," answered Zach—"they will carry me through the world, or I vastly overrate them. This is no time for sorrowing; I have made the grand plunge, and shall sink or swim in this Henwood venture. I am light of heart, Teddy—I am not in trouble, though I thank you for coming all the same."

"But—Mrs. Henwood's daughter?"

"Will stand by me—she is a true woman. And

the mother will not let her child go away and leave her alone in the world—will not care after this to make an enemy of me."

"An enemy—*you* can never be that woman's enemy!"

"If she seek to balk me at every step, to keep me down, to cast in darkness that path of mine which would be bright without her—why not?"

"She saved you."

"I think sometimes that she condemned me!"

"Zach! Zach!" entreated Teddy, "if you would think of a lower station of life—of not robbing this woman of her daughter, and proving to the world how ungratefully you have acted—if you would but think what you and I could do together abroad!"

"It is all fair sailing here," said Zach; "would you have me tempt the goddess Fortune by going elsewhere in search of her, when she is smiling at my side? Very kind, very praiseworthy and generous of you, Teddy, but I am safe! Six months ago I might have doubted my security—not now."

"What do you intend to do?"

"Make my fortune—it is an easy task."

"You will marry this girl?"

"We shall see," answered Zach evasively; "I am not to be hoodwinked by her selfish mother. I hate selfishness!"

"Then I cannot help you? I cannot do anything for you?"

"No."

"No advice of mine is of any good?"

"Advice comes too late in life for me—I have always mistrusted my advisers—I depend upon my own exertions to reach the end I see before me."

Teddy rose with a half-suppressed sigh.

"I will go away," he said, "if I can do no good. Of course," he added, half apologetically, "under other circumstances, I would not have intruded here."

"Thank you—thank you for coming, Teddy," said Zach, rising with his brother; "I was an unworthy subject for you to consider. I did not believe that there was one friend on whom I could rely like this—a friend in the shade. Some day," he added more quickly, "I may ask you to help me—then I will come to you. Good-bye."

He extended both his hands in the impulse—the good impulse—of that hour; and Teddy took them in his own for an instant, and then passed

out of the room, for the second time that day a baffled man. His fair dream of going abroad with Zach—and Zach's company in a new world making amends for all the friends in the old—had been quickly dissipated, and it seemed like one more sorrow that had come to him as he walked slowly back to Upper Ground Street.

Meanwhile, Zach had drawn himself very close to the fire again to wonder at all this—to let his wonderment take the place of the many schemes of which his head was full. An old head on young shoulders—very old and worldly—but disturbed that night by the presence of his brother. He could not shake that brother off; he tried at last, but he would intrude upon him, and give that thoughtful, sorrowful expression to his face. He was still trying, when the landlady's daughter came into the room with the supper-tray.

"Take it away!" he cried hastily, "I can't eat. I shall never be able to eat again, I think."

"You aint happy—oh! you aint, I know!" cried the impulsive Arabella.

"Who is, in this confounded disagreeable hemisphere," cried Zach, with that affected lightness which did not become him very well, because

it was foreign to his character; "why, you *aint* happy either, Bella?"

"Why should I be," was the sullen answer; "who cares whether I am or not?"

"Who cares!"

"It isn't mother—it isn't you."

"I wish that I had the time to defend myself," said he, "but I am busy to-night, and have half a hundred letters to write when you take that cursed supper-tray downstairs."

His airiness of demeanour vanished suddenly, and he spoke like his father for an instant.

"You've got to write to Miss Henwood amongst the rest, no doubt!" cried Arabella—"you know you have."

"Hollo!" said Zach; "you have been listening?"

"It's time I did listen, if I want to take care of myself," said the girl indignantly. "I'm not a fool, or to be made a fool by you any longer. It's been a capital bit of fun for you to make love to me after business, and when your fine ladies haven't been near to see your goings on. But I didn't want to come after you—I didn't—didn't care about you a bit!"

The girl—she was not seventeen yet—left the

supper-tray on the table, and flounced herself into a chair to cry, and hold her hands before her face, and sob very passionately and piteously. Zach went to her, and tried to calm her.

"Bella, Bella," he said, "this is all very foolish. You have taken my silly speeches in earnest, and it was only a flirtation, after all, between us, with no harm on either side—with nothing for you or me to reproach ourselves."

"You—you—tried your hardest to make me fon-fon-fond of you! You know you did," she cried. "If you'd only have asked me to die for you——"

"Which I wouldn't have done for the world," said Zach; "better that you should live to be a blessing to some good soul in the neighbourhood. There's that dentist!"

"I hate dentists!" sobbed Bella.

"Yes—so do I," asserted Zach. "Horrible wretches, always putting cold steel against sensitive teeth! There, Bella, don't cry any more, there's a good girl!"

"You are going to marry that Miss Henwood, then?"

"I don't know. I'm going to try—it's my ill luck, perhaps, but I can't help it now. It's a

question of money, Bella, and I'm the most mercenary wretch that ever lived."

"Not—not for love, then? Oh! dear!"

There was consolation in this, Bella thought—a dreary, dismal consolation, doubtless, but it helped to dry her eyes.

"I don't love her one half as well as I love you, upon my soul! It was an early engagement, when we were children almost, and I did not know my own mind—but my word is my bond, you see. There, wipe your eyes, and go downstairs to your mother."

He kissed her again, and she cried again at his caress, but did not cast him off. There *was* some consolation in thinking that his word went one way, and his inclination another—and did he not imply whither his inclination would have strayed had he been free? This was real romance, or tragedy, at least; she had seen something very like it at the Surrey playhouse once, where it had all ended in blue fire and murder. Still there were the proprieties to maintain now, and the heroine to sustain. She got away from Zach's encircling arm, and looked daggers at him—mild daggers, of pasteboard material, and with no points.

"You've tried to trifle with me," said she, seizing

the supper-tray in her hands, "and that's all over now between us. You should have known your own mind before you asked her, and not have cared so much for the money. You might have expected to see, some—one—else you liked better as you grew older. You'd better give her up than break her heart!"

"Too late!" said Zach.

"If she could have heard you to-night—and known how deceitful you were, poor girl!" whimpered Bella, as she went out of the room.

If she could have heard him! Zach thought of that when Bella had withdrawn, and left him with his deceitful self. Yes, very deceitful, was this Zachary Fernwell; Bella had given him his true cognomen; he deceived sometimes out of the very love of the thing, and to keep himself in practice. "I don't love her half as well as I love you, upon my soul!" he had said to Bella Evvers, and it might be true enough, judging by what we have seen of this man—the words deceived Bella, at least, and in her romantic misery afforded her a fragment of consolation. Zach was ashamed of himself that night, for as he turned once more to the fire, and crouched over it, he groaned very heavily and bitterly.

CHAPTER IV.

MARTIN'S PERPLEXITY.

IN a posture similar to that of Zachary Fernwell's, we left Martin Wynn. We return to Griffin Street, to look in upon him after Teddy had departed, watching the fire, as Zach watched some hours after him—as we all watch in our nervous, despondent, or hopeful moments, when the fear or the joy is masked by incertitude.

Martin Wynn was in doubt—more, Martin was vexed. He had plumed himself, almost unwittingly, upon his knowledge of character, and his acute perceptions; in his wise conceit he thought that it was impossible to be deceived in the humanity around him. He had had an intense faith in Teddy, in believing that Teddy concealed nothing from him. It had been a character formed as it were after his own model; he had done his best, and striven very hard to make his protegée an honest, open-hearted man; until that

day he had congratulated himself on his success.

Now, all his ideas were confused, for Teddy had deceived him—had contrived to live in his house and fall in love with his daughter, and no one, not even Christie, the wiser for it. He should have as soon dreamed of Christie deceiving him, as Teddy Fernwell. After all, was it deceit on Teddy's part, or his own foolish blindness?—these were the better thoughts at last of a man who always judged fairly—or tried to do so. After all, what had Teddy done?

"My own fault, in a great degree," confessed Martin. "He saw her every day, and he was deeply grateful for her share in his redemption; and surely Christie—God bless her!—is a girl to be loved for herself. Why, when he went away almost without a reason to live with them at Upper Ground Street, I should have guessed it—the whole truth should have dawned upon me then. Poor Teddy!—it was not to be helped, and it was not his fault. He would have died with his secret, had not his honest soul been wrung by my denunciations of his brother. I begin to think," he added, roughing up his hair the wrong way with both hands, "that I've been a bit of a brute in this

matter. I'll go over to Upper Ground Street in the evening."

But he did not go, or he might have had to wonder at Teddy's visit to Zach's lodgings, and to have seen in it, judging by appearances, a collusion between the brothers, and have distrusted both of them; for Martin Wynn was a man, after all, who judged hastily at times.

Late in the afternoon Christie came home from chapel, full of chapel news, and all the small talk of the chapel folk whom she had met. Martin Wynn listened rather dreamily for once—when the gas was lighted over the tea-table, at which Christie presided, the daughter became speedily aware how much the father's dreaminess preponderated.

Yes, sharp people these Wynns; for the gas had not been lighted three minutes when Christie said—

"Has anything happened since I went away this morning?"

"I should think there had," burst forth the father; "it's just as if everything horrible had happened to me. I feel perplexed and vexed and miserable."

"You!"

"Ah! it is odd—but it's a fact. I shall shake it off after tea, or when I have told you everything. I hope that you are prepared for one or two great shocks, my girl, for they are coming."

Christie looked appalled for an instant at this; and then summoned all her strength to the rescue.

"Nothing—about—Teddy?" was her first question.

"Teddy comes last—he is the *dénouement*, and I shall want your advice about him. He has gone away for good—I'll tell you presently."

"Gone—*gone* away for good! *Teddy!*" emphasized the wondering girl. "Oh, what can have happened! You two have not quarrelled, I'm sure!"

"No—we have not quarrelled."

"But——"

"But I'll begin at the first chapter, instead of the last, if you will allow me," said Martin; "it's a habit of mine to be methodical. In the first place, then, Mrs. Henwood has been here."

Christie nodded impatiently. This would have been rare news half an hour ago, but it was not to the purport now—it did not affect her life, or her "surroundings." She listened to

the story that Mrs. Henwood had related in that room—or feigned to listen, for there was a fixed stare in her large eyes that might have indicated attention or abstraction. She heard the news with impassibility, at all events—not highly scandalized by Zach's behaviour, not deeply interested in the mother's trouble, robbed almost of her daughter by the schemer, thinking more of the daughter, as she had seen her last, and of the wild words in which Lettice accused her for what would happen afterwards, but regarding everything as a story that affected her but little—that could be set aside and dwelt upon more fully at a time far more appropriate—a something in which she was interested as in a story, nothing more.

But she was yearning for the next revelation that came nearer home, and wondering why her father was so cruel as to leave it to the last.

Mr. Wynn approached the looked-for topic finally. He took a deep breath, and with his full brown eyes fixed upon his daughter's face, began :

"I told this tale to Zach's brother, sparing no comment upon Zach's duplicity, saying very plainly how base and vile it was to sting the hand that had fostered it, and break down even the pride

of the woman who, after her own fashion, had done her best for him. I marked very plainly my abhorrence of this ingratitude; and I called that man a coward, Christie, who hid a secret that was antagonistic to the hopes or the wishes of his benefactor. Then, whatever do you think he said in reply?"

"I know!—I know!" cried Christie, strangely agitated, and with her eyes aflare with an excitement that took the rest of her father's breath away. "I see it all now from beginning to end, though I dared not fancy so—though I would not tell even myself. What did he say?" she cried, clapping her hands together—"why, that he loved me!—didn't he, now?—oh! didn't he?"

"Lord have mercy upon her!—she's gone mad!" ejaculated Martin Wynn, when he found his voice at last; "what do you mean?—how could you guess all this, and, guessing it, to go on in this wild fashion? Aren't you horrified?"

"Not a bit—I'm proud and happy!—oh! dear, it's almost wicked to say how happy I am!"

"Christie," said Martin, in a very stern voice, "don't say that you have deceived me also?"

"I have deceived myself," she said, stealing

towards him, dropping down at his feet, and looking up at him with her hands folded on his knees; "I did not know until to-night how much his happiness was mine, or what I would give to promote it. But I did love to see how utterly unselfish that man was—how good, and true, and noble you had made him; and I think I loved him long ago, when I was sure he looked to you, as we are taught only to look towards our Saviour. Oh! if this is wrong, I have done it—I could no more help it than I could help breathing; and if he, of all men, is unhappy, I shall never know a happy moment again!"

She dropped her head upon her hands, and cried a little. Martin sat more bewildered than ever at this evidence of passion in his daughter's nature—she, of all women, so calm, and equable, and maiden-like. He rested his hand upon his daughter's hair, however, and said, gently,

"We must consider this, and see what can evolve from this. It's a pretty mess, now, and no mistake," he added.

Christie looked up, and smiled at him through her tears. There was a pride in her reply, too.

"I do not want to marry him—I will even try to forget him altogether, if you wish it; but he must not be unhappy altogether, and through me."

Martin roughed his hair again, turning every hair the wrong way, and working long and laboriously with his hands, till he looked almost demoniacal about the head.

"It's a puzzle," he said.

"What is?"

"That I did not see it all, and guess all that you did not know, and he tried so well to hide—that is what vexes me," he said, stamping his foot; —"what a mole of a fellow I must be! And then——"

He paused, and looked very grave again.

"And then the past looming behind him, such a black wall of a thing, Chris!" he said; "he fears it himself and—there, he isn't good enough for *you*, and I don't much like the thought of it."

"He is an honest man—a clever, thoughtful, gentle, and earnest man—why should you and I taunt him with the evil of which he has repented, and of which repentance those in heaven are glad?"

"Yes, but——"

"But my father has listened too long to Mrs. Henwood," said Christie, archly, "and is thinking of POSITION."

"Now, dash it!" exclaimed Martin Wynn—"that's too bad. *I* think of position, Christie?—you wicked young woman, who want to marry my assistant!"

"No, I don't want to marry him," asserted Christie—"time enough for me to think of that, when he finds the courage to ask me. But I don't want him to be condemned unjustly."

"I'll not condemn him," said Martin; "but it's a fix, for all that. Why, bless us, there's Mr. Ubbs to consider!"

"Oh! I told him a few weeks ago that I was afraid that I should never be able to love him as he deserved."

"And what did he say?"

"That he hoped I should in time, when I knew how very good he was—that ten years hence would suit him, because he was a very patient man, and in no immediate hurry."

"Ah! then, Ubbs will not be cut up very much—but he was the man, Chris. As for this Teddy, I'm not quite sure—I can't be sure."

He was not quite sure all that evening; all the next day Teddy the absent, was a topic for intense thought over his work—the more so, that his daughter Christie shunned all further allusion to him, and became thoughtful herself. Martin Wynn reviewed the past in all its *minutiæ*, and saw much to admire in Teddy—how steadily and earnestly he had progressed, and what confidence he had always had in the master. A wonderful change in this man, but still scarcely the man for Christie—scarcely good enough. Martin was not proud, we know, but he shrank from the alliance; he understood the world, and though he professed not to study it, yet he paid a certain amount of attention to its whisperings, and he knew what it would say. Still he loved Teddy almost like a son, and he missed him very much. He would do nothing in a hurry, so he let another day go by, and had another "long think" to himself, vexed within himself at Teddy's silence.

Suddenly he started off in the evening to Upper Ground Street, catching Teddy at home, with the watchman and Polly, a few minutes before eight in the evening. Teddy crimsoned at the sudden appearance of Martin Wynn in their midst; but

he rose and took the hand extended to him, gripping it spasmodically.

"Glad to see you, Martin," said old Mr. Wynn; "although it's close on eight, and there's never much chance of a long talk with you. Christie is well, I hope?"

"Yes—very well."

Martin sat down, and placed his hat on his knees; he was doubtful how to begin the subject, or how much, or how little, his father or sister might know of Teddy's story.

"When are you coming back to work?" he asked, a little abruptly.

"Who?—I, sir?". exclaimed Teddy, turning very red again.

"There's no good to follow idling time away; and if your brother has put you out a bit, why, it's soon got over by a strong mind."

"Yes, sir—soon got over."

Mr. Wynn, senior, exclaimed at the same time, "His brother!" and Polly cried out, "Oh! that Zach of ours! No harm to him, I hope?"

"Harm in him a little," answered Martin, seizing the opportunity to account for Teddy's absence from business, although doubting its effect,

or how much Teddy had confessed; "Zach and Mrs. Henwood have had a quarrel, about business matters and a few other things, and in expressing my opinion upon Zach, Teddy grew warm in his brother's defence, and we scarcely understood each other, for the first time in our lives."

Martin Wynn, it may be seen, could prevaricate. We regret to record this want of perfection in him, but the correctness of our narrative must be respected.

"I did not defend my brother," answered Teddy, bluntly; "he was in the wrong—I said so."

"What is it all about?" exclaimed Polly; "mayn't we hear?"

"Aint we good enough to be trusted with a secret?" said the old gentleman, tetchily; "about the boy, too, in whose rise we've all had a hand. Teddy, I'm ashamed of you, not to tell us before this!"

"Teddy shall tell you all after I have gone, father," said Martin; "he did not consider himself justified without my permission; and it is a story that Mrs. Henwood would not like to have circulated."

"Mrs. Henwood has had lots of confidence in

me," replied his father; "or I should not be still in her service at my time of life."

"N-no," said Martin, with a scowl at the carpet, "you wouldn't. If she had a little less, it would be better for your health."

"I was never better in my life," affirmed Mr. Wynn, senior; "if your hateful pride didn't worry me so much."

"My pride!" said Martin; "that's a good joke."

Martin objected to any remarks on his pride, it may be seen. Accusations of that character were sure to disturb him. But Mr. Wynn, senior, was inclined to be aggravating that evening; he had a firm belief that he had been slighted and kept in the dark; and though naturally a patient man, we know that he was inclined to stand upon his rights. Martin had no chance of soothing him before he went away; time was up, and the watchman always took time to subside. He departed with an assumption of dignity, and Martin, ruffled in the faintest degree—he had been ruffled all the week—returned to the one subject that had brought him to the house. Polly would have dashed in with Zach's case again—thinking

naturally enough that Zach's case was Teddy's—when Martin stopped her.

"Do talk about all this, Polly, when I'm gone," he said quite fretfully; "haven't I had enough argument with the old gentleman, and won't he stew away all night at the wharf, if I don't look him up as I go back?"

"You're much more *touchy* than you used to be, Martin," said his sister.

"I'm getting old and querulous," replied her brother; "and I always disliked interruptions. Now, Teddy," turning to his late assistant, who was eyeing him askance, "when are you going to answer my question?"

"When am I coming back to work?" said Teddy; "why, what's the use, sir, of putting such a question to me?"

"I don't know a question that is more natural."

Teddy looked his master full in the face and answered him.

"Never, sir."

"That's a resolution I must shake, or I shall think you bear me malice, Teddy."

"Malice, sir!" echoed the other; "all the good will in my heart, I bear you, and whatever hap-

pens, or however ill you may hereafter think of me, I shall continue to bear. But I shall never come back to Griffin Street!"

"Why not?"

Teddy looked towards Polly, and hesitated to reply. Martin hesitated for an instant to press the question, then his frankness asserted itself.

"It's no use going on like this—we shall be worried to death with her suspicions, if we keep her in the dark. Polly, this young fellow here thinks that he likes Christie too well, and had better stay away."

"Good gracious! if I didn't think as much!"

"Ah! you're a woman!" was her brother's disparaging remark. "I thought that there was little use in keeping you in the dark."

"Do go on, please."

And Polly folded her little fat hands in her lap, and became full of intense interest in this love-story. She had not had a love-story to amuse herself with since she was a girl.

"I had an idea that he had better stay away too," continued Martin; "but I think that Christie can keep out of his way, now I have put her on her guard," he added, drily; "and, at all events, I

cannot part with him, pupil, friend, and son!"

Teddy might have taken much hope from those words, had he been a sanguine man; but he had long ago made up his mind, and no brighter mood of Martin Wynn could change him now.

"Thank you, sir," he added, looking down; "but I have thought it all over during the last two days, and I shall stay away for good. So much the better, sir, I'm sure, for all of us."

"But——"

"I signed for six months with Stanley and Burns yesterday," said Teddy, thinking that the easier method to dispose of an argument that pained him.

"You were in a hurry," said Martin, "and they were in a hurry, too, to secure a good hand, and throw me over. Well, it's a settler!"

Martin Wynn put his hat on his head.

"Don't act so hastily another time, Teddy," he said; "impulse is a bad thing, and may lead you the wrong road."

"I am on the right road now, sir."

"Without me, you mean? Your own master, to make new friends, and shake off the old!"

"I have confidence in myself—I shake off no

old friends, though it may be right—it *is* right," he affirmed, with emphasis, "to shake me off."

"Who is thinking of that?" asked Martin.

"I hope you are," said Teddy. "If you have changed your mind, you pain me. For, oh! sir, it was wrong in me not to tell you that there was one temptation I could not fight against. I hid it from you, and found my guilty happiness in seeing her sometimes."

"Lucky for Christie that she did not find you out—and take your part against the parent, like Mrs. Henwood's daughter," said Martin.

"That was not likely," answered Teddy, receiving Martin's words more seriously than they were intended; "but if it had been—supposing for one instant, sir, that it had been—do you know what I should have done?"

"Married her on the sly, and come to me for forgiveness afterwards?" asked Martin.

"I should have *disappeared!*" said Teddy, "for your sake and her own, at the first suspicion—I should have been heard of no more!"

"For my sake, by way of return, I understand this," said Martin; "but why for her sake?"

"I am not fit for her," he answered, sadly; "no

after life—no after penitence can make me fit for her. I would be her slave if she despised me, but I would not be her husband, for her own sake, if she loved me. There, all this is very foolish—I have told you this before,—you and I together have looked back more than once at the prison shadows—at the boy thief! Sir, I shall never come to Griffin Street again—I respect you and her too much—I have given you pain, and been ungrateful to you both. Keep away from me, and leave me to my life of atonement for the error."

Teddy darted out of the room—out of the house into the street. It was at a late hour when he returned, and went cautiously upstairs into his own room, without bidding even Polly Wynn good night.

CHAPTER V.

ZACH OFFERS HIS RESIGNATION.

MRS. HENWOOD was in great trouble. her costly furniture, staff of servants, t finest set of diamonds of any one of her acquai ance, all the money at her bankers' and in t funds, all the money still pouring in through t profitable channels of her two great wharves— the pleasures that her dazzling world could off could not on this occasion take one grain of hea ness away.

She had been terribly disappointed; she h been cruelly deceived in her own daughter; s had looked forward to that daughter being a cc fort to her, as well as a companion, until Lett married some one of good birth and position, a ing thereby an extra radiance to the house Henwood. She was mortified, too, to the utt most; for she had never liked this Zachary in

heart, and had long ago repented of her charity towards him. It had been a mad freak, and she reaped now the penalty of her rashness, by the ingratitude which followed it. She had had no faith in these Fernwells, and yet had been fool enough to be talked into adopting one of them; if she had but held aloof in her pride and stateliness, how much the better for her! She had gone out of her way to meet her own humiliation.

She thought of herself first—but she thought of her daughter in the second place, and felt that no happiness to Lettice could ensue from the union. She was sure of it; poor judge of character as she was, she saw the craftiness of the nephew, and the motive which had lured him on better than the eccentric girl whom he had hoodwinked. She put forth all her power to stop the match, but became conscious of her own futility. She made preparations for leaving England once more, but Lettice refused to go at the eleventh hour; she threatened Lettice with Zach's dismissal from the firm, and Lettice replied that on the first day of Zach's departure from office she would become his wife; Lettice was firm, and the mother knew too well that she would keep her word. And that

mother was *not* a firm woman, Lettice knew—obstinate at times, but weak-minded, capricious, and with a woman's habit of deferring matters of moment to a future day.

It all ended in a truce—a hollow truce, with not a great deal of confidence on either side. Zach was to retain his post at the wharf, but Lettice was not to see him. Lettice might write to him if she pleased; it was against her mother's wish, but it was not part of the compact, and whether Zach wrote to Lettice or not, did not matter to the mother; she was weary of the subject, and she was only hopeful of some unforeseen event turning her daughter's mind to other thoughts. Lettice had maintained that she would be true to Zach, but she had also said that she would await her mother's consent; that she would refrain from seeing her lover, providing that mother forced no fresh suitor on her, and did not interfere with her in any way. So the truce signed and sealed, and all the elements of discord in that house at Wimbledon, "a difference" between the mother and the daughter, "a difference" in everything in consequence.

Mrs. Henwood took Lettice into society, sum-

moned society to Wimbledon; she had great faith in fresh faces and new flatterers, for they had been of service to *her*. Even now they kept her from wholly breaking down; although she was a miserable woman enough, directly the last carriage had driven away with the last guests.

Lettice was not happy either. She did not give her mother credit for any affection towards her; she knew the vanity and worldliness of her mother, and she treasured in remembrance, as though it was a wrong, the isolation of her childhood, that had had no evidence of a mother's love or interest to gladden it. A thoughtful girl—but a girl who thought at right angles, as it were, and brooded on many fancies till they took the semblance of injuries. Vain in her way too—self-willed and obdurate, with many good traits of character fighting very hard to come uppermost, but buried under the mannerisms and the foibles of her nature. Spoiled in the teaching like Zach—like many others without earnest eyes upon them, and good influences at work to develop the virtues in bud. A woman impressed with a wrong idea, and convinced that it was right—naturally, therefore, the hardest woman to manage in the world, and far

beyond all management of Mrs. Henwood.

Mrs. Henwood had sought Martin Wynn's advice, but the marqueterie worker had told her to talk like a mother to Lettice—as if Lettice cared for her mother, or the mother had not already done her best! Martin Wynn had seen the impracticable nature of her task, and so put her off with a few fine words, that meant nothing. She called Mr. Tinchester to her side, despite her verdict expressed in public on the little sense that he possessed; she was anxious to know all that threatened her from every quarter.

She told the story to the faithful manager—a good manager, if a little slow and old-fashioned for the times,—but Mr. Tinchester had long ago seen Zach's ability, and had entrusted much of the management to Zach, thankful for more ease, and confident in the capabilities of the junior. Moreover, he liked Zach, who had made himself agreeable to him, and studied his idiosyncrasies. Mr. Tinchester was surprised at the revelation, but not shocked.

"A nephew," he said; "the business, my dear madam, could not be in better hands—it ought to keep to the Henwoods whilst one of the name is left."

"To think that you have come all the way down here to talk like this!" was Mrs. Henwood's feeble plaint. "I don't like Zachary—he's not straightforward—he's not affectionate—he's not truthful."

"He's a very good business man—he's a genius at business—of course I do not know if he would make your daughter a good husband," said Mr. Tinchester; "that depends, I presume, upon their liking for one another."

"Supposing that I made this man my enemy—that I turned him away?" asked Mrs. Henwood.

"Turned him away!—dismissed him as submanager, do you mean?"

Mrs. Henwood nodded. There was a terrible craving to defy him and her daughter together, and act her father's part. If she had been less lonely—had more children to fall back upon—loved Lettice even less, she would have done it long since.

"Yes—what could he do?"

"I think that he could do us a great deal of harm."

"And he so young!—and the business so long established!—nonsense!"

Mr. Tinchester thought, with a little dismay, of

how the reins had long since been given into the hands of this fast driving young man; how the business had increased; how it had been Zach's business to know everybody, and to ingratiate himself with everybody worth his while. How he had had every confidence in Zachary, and trusted to him, more especially of later months, in everything. An uncomfortable feeling began to creep over him too, that he had been deceived by this junior manager's energy.

"Pray don't dismiss him yet awhile," said Mr. Tinchester; "let me make quite sure of the extent of his power. You see, he is thoroughly a business man. I have always fancied, you know," he said, apologizing indirectly for his great confidence in Zach, "that you would make him a partner. Indeed, now I come to think of it, he hinted as much to me in confidence nine months ago."

"You're not a match for him—you're too weak and soft, Mr. Tinchester."

"Oh, no, I'm not!" said Mr. Tinchester, flushing up.

"I can't see any good in your advice. I will advise you to look more sharply after my interests

in future. I think that you have been neglecting them."

"I've been doing my best—the business has increased."

"Through him—I see his plan. The name of Henwood will not be lost yet, if he does not change it. I am a miserable woman, and no one thinks of me!"

"Pardon me, madam—you're wrong."

Mrs. Henwood knew that, knew, too, that this perky little gentleman had his ambition also, and loved her as well—or almost as well—as the wharves.

"I'm not."

"You may always rely upon me, Mrs. Henwood, to serve you faithfully—to set your interests ever before my own. Some day, when you are tired of the world, and see how false half the people are in it, I have a hope—a faint one—that you——"

"That I will take you into partnership, as well as my nephew!" she exclaimed. "I think that you have had a liberal salary, and that there is nothing to complain about."

"Madam, my dear madam, I don't complain. I thank heaven that I am a contented man."

"Then, goodness me! why don't you hold your tongue?"

There was a pleasure in exacting obedience yet from those who served her; it revived Mrs. Henwood to think that in this quarter she reigned paramount. She was better in spirits that day—though Mr. Tinchester had not left behind him any consolation.

The following day, to her amazement and confusion, the servant brought in the card of Mr. Zachary Fernwell.

"I told him not to come here. He has broken the compact between us all," she cried, to the footman's surprise. "Where is he?"

"In the drawing-room."

Mrs. Henwood deliberated on the expediency of refusing him an interview; thought of Mr. Tinchester, then of Lettice, and lastly of some hidden danger which she felt was hanging over her.

"I will come to him," she said.

In a few minutes afterwards she entered the room where her nephew awaited her, and bowed very coldly to his respectful salutation.

"I don't think that it is fair to come," she said in a voice that was less measured than her bow had been; "you are not acting fairly in this matter."

"Pardon me, Mrs. Henwood," replied Zachary, "but I will ask you not to judge me unfairly till I have explained my presence here. My business is urgent, or I should not have intruded."

Mrs. Henwood dropped into an easy chair, and endeavoured to compose herself. But her hands trembled, and she was vexed that she could not conceal her agitation. Up to that period she had plumed herself on her deportment, her grace and ease and general coolness in difficult positions—but she was inferior to that young man confronting her, and she could have struck at him for his advantage over her.

"Say what you have to say, and be gone!" she said peevishly.

"I am very sorry, Mrs. Henwood, to note this difference in your manner—to find you still against me," commenced Zach respectfully, but firmly. "I had a hope that time, the ties of kindred, your interest in your daughter's happiness, would have finally done much for me. To say that I am disappointed, and that your harshness pains me very much, is not to express half the regret which I feel on this occasion."

"You have not treated me well," said Mrs. Henwood, "and I shall not forgive you, unless—"

"Unless," repeated Zach.

"Unless you give up Lettice—resign that claim upon her, obtained unworthily and in hostility to me. Give her up," cried Mrs. Henwood, "and name your price."

Whether the temptation crossed the mind of Zachary Fernwell to accept the proposition is doubtful—Zach's mind was crossed by strange thoughts very often, and this might have been one of them. He paused and considered, but it might not have been of his chances without Lettice; it did not appear so from his after speech. But, at all events, he paused, and Mrs. Henwood thought that there lurked a hope for her in his silence.

"Mrs. Henwood, I love your daughter," Zach said at last. "I will respect your wish, and not seek to inveigle your daughter into a marriage without your consent, but I will only give her up at her request."

"She is spell-bound—and you know it."

"She has preferred me to men who might have made her offers more advantageous in a worldly point of view—whose positions at the present hour at least are brighter than my own—and I cannot be the first to break the spell at which you scoff."

"You have not come to Wimbledon to tell me this?"

"No, madam."

Zach spoke very deliberately, watching keenly the effect of every word upon his aunt. He had come to play his last card in the great game, and he was, for all his outward coolness, nervous concerning the result. He would not betray to her all that was trembling in the balance, and how that afternoon's decision would decide his future.

"I have come, Mrs. Henwood, to offer my resignation as sub-manager of your business. In that business you, I think, will not reproach me with having served you unfaithfully. The account of that stewardship, which I am prepared to render, will show that I have done my best to add many hundreds to your annual income."

"I did not want more money," said his aunt—"I only wanted my daughter to myself. If you had served me as well in this house as at the wharf, I might have had reason to rejoice."

"I would have made your daughter very happy as my wife."

"No, no. I do not believe that."

"Well, I dare not argue that question with you—it pains me, and excites you—it is foreign to my mission here. Mrs. Henwood, I cannot remain in the service of a lady who mistrusts my honesty of purpose."

"You must go, then," said Mrs. Henwood; "I am glad that it has come to this—that this is your step, not mine."

"A step brought about by your suspicions," corrected Zach; "do not reproach me for all that may ensue from it."

"Ensue from it?" repeated his aunt—"you will not seek to lure Lettice away from me?"

"As your servant I was tied to obligations which exist no longer—but I will not marry her, I repeat, without your consent. It is her wish, and mine. We may have been wrong to love one another, but we had faith in you and your generosity. I was not alluding to Lettice, or my love for her, when I spoke of what might happen."

"Will you explain?"

"Madam, I give up my office under you, but it is not my intention to starve in consequence. I cannot go back to the streets, or to a petty-clerk-

ship—that I consider, justly or unjustly, beneath the abilities that I possess. You brought me up—and I thank you for it very gratefully—with grand ideas of life, and I cannot sink that new nature, which you bestowed upon me. I will do credit to your teaching, for I will rise in life, or cut my throat!"

"Don't talk like that," said the shocked Mrs. Henwood—"that's not proper talk, and says little for your bringing up. I never paid for that notion being instilled into you."

"Next week—my resignation having been accepted by yourself—will see me general manager of a new company, based upon the warehousing and wharfage principle."

"In opposition—eh?"

"No, not in opposition," said Zach—"far from it. There may be a little honest competition, and I will work very hard for that company's success, for on that depends my after life."

"Who will take up your shares?"

"Three-fourths of them will be subscribed for to-morrow—this will not be a bubble company, for I am well-known in the City, and the City has already confidence in me."

"You have schemed very well, Zachary Fernwell, I do not doubt," said Mrs. Henwood; "you may have ingratiated yourself with those who have supported us for many years—you may get your place, make your fortune, and rob us of our trade. Well, I may be sorry for the loss of income, but there is no one to come after me, and you cannot despoil me of that which I have already earned. You must do your worst for me, and your best for yourself," she added, rising with more dignity than she had ever shown before in life—life having been with her all superficiality; "but I accept your resignation."

"Very well, madam."

Zachary's lips compressed, but he betrayed no emotion, though his disappointment was keen. He had laid the ground of his new venture; he had not threatened in vain, for the power to do harm was in his hands; but he knew the quicksands still in the way of success, and what an army of bloodsuckers hangs to the young life of a company. He had built too much on Mrs. Henwood's love of money, and consideration for her own place in the world; and now there remained for him but the venture of which he had

spoken. It would be successful, he thought, for it would have powerful backers; but how much better it would have been for Mrs. Henwood to have taken him into partnership, or have raised his salary as manager, giving him Lettice to wife, and, with Lettice, the handsomest dowry in her power to bestow.

"Very well, madam," he said, "I am to consider myself free. For all sakes, I regret it."

He went to the door, and paused there, but she did not ask him to stop. He went out of the room, closing the door behind him, and pausing again on the mat without, lest he should be called for even yet; he went out of the house at last, with a bitter oath, that it was as well no ears but his own heard on that occasion.

"Now, for myself!" he cried; "with mercy on no one in my way!"

Mrs. Henwood remained in the drawing-room, pondering on Zach's words. They had hurt her pride, they had distressed her about the business even—a year or two ago she would have succumbed to Zach, for the sake of the wealth that that business brought to her. But she had altered—she was sure that she had altered very much—her

world was a garish, unsympathetic place, with no one to live in it; and in the crowd that changed to and fro there, like the glasses in the children's toy, there was not one that showed upon its varnished face one look of love for her. She would have been more happy, if she had been less rich, she thought. Alas! it never struck her that with the same faults of vanity, selfishness, and want of all interest in pure and holy things, there was no estate that could have brought her one scrap more comfort in her tribulation. In health and strength, with the power to enjoy pleasure, her world was fair enough; but with health failing, and the night coming on, what a world to hope for solace in! She reached her hand out and touched the bell, full of a new thought.

"Where is Miss Henwood?"

"In her room, madam."

"I wish to speak to her at once."

In a few minutes Lettice Henwood, grave, inflexible, and with a heavy cast of countenance, loomed upon the mother.

"You sent for me?"

"Yes—sit down, Lettice, and don't worry me by an exhibition of more impatience than you can help. You know who has been here?"

"Yes."

"You have seen him?" cried the suspicious mother.

"No."

"He came to-day to offer me his resignation, and I accepted it," said Mrs. Henwood; "it was his own doing, and not my revenge—I am not a revengeful woman. Next week he starts a company that will do its best to ruin me—to destroy that business connected so long with our name."

"You have driven him to this."

"How could I drive him?"

"He begins the world for himself, dependent on his own exertions," cried Lettice, bursting through her assumed stoicism of behaviour; "it was what I advised him to do long since. Why should he receive your money, and be taunted by the sneers with which his wages are doled out to him? Now I can go to him free-handed and say, 'Zach, you are a nobler fellow than I thought you, and you shall not toil alone!'"

"You think not of his ingratitude to me?"

"I admire him for his independence."

"And you will go away to him without my consent?"

"I shall be happy with him—I never shall be happy here."

"Go, then—leave me alone if you like—I will not be distressed continually like this. Look at my face since you have resisted my authority—why, good God! it is the face of a woman of sixty!"

It was strange how the woman's vanity leaped forth, still influencing her actions even in that hour. Had it not hovered so closely upon tragedy, we could have afforded still to smile at it.

"I have not been happy here—you have not understood me," cried Lettice; "I have tried you patiently, waiting patiently for a sign of your relenting, to prove that I studied your pride amidst it all. But you kept firm and cruel, and I will not help you now."

"I never was a good hand at riddles—I don't want any riddles from you," said Mrs. Henwood; "if you will leave me, do so."

"I will."

"But he shall not have a penny of my money at any time. He loves you but for that, I know. Why, every action of his dastard life proves that. He shall starve!"

"He shall not!" cried the defiant Lettice; "if he fail in life, I will make him rich!"

"Pah!—I defy you!"

Lettice flashed up, a tigress at this defiance.

"Wait here an instant," she said, "I will return."

She left the room, and came back an instant afterwards with a yellow parchment in her hands. Mrs. Henwood looked with horror at it; fraught with a new suspicion, that came to her in that moment to unnerve her.

"Where did you get that? What is it?"

"It is an assignment of the Warwickshire property to the Fernwells—your father's deed of gift—revoking, nullifying that will which disinherited Zach's mother. I found it in the secret drawer of the old cabinet, the day Martin Wynn came here."

"And it gives those estates——"

"To his daughter, Ellen Fernwell, and to her husband, until the children are of age—then the children take their share with the parents."

"He never meant it to be seen—my father hid it out of very shame. Give it me!"

"He repented—he says so in this document; but he left it to your mother to give up the property to the Fernwells,—and your mother died

before him. Those estates were sold for £60,000."

"Money to go away from me to those thieves—to Fernwell, the tramp, above all! Well, well, you must ruin me between you. I am a defenceless woman, and cannot stand against you all!"

She closed her eyes, and lay back helplessly; she was defeated; at all turns of her road there stood an enemy to baffle her—here, at the last, her own daughter!

Lettice came to her side, and dropped suddenly before her, clasping her arms about her neck.

"Why should we fight and scheme like this, mamma, when we can all be happy? Why turn against me and Zach, distrusting both of us?"

"I only distrust him!"

"Give your consent to our marriage, and take Zach into partnership, binding him by ties of gratitude to you, and thus indirectly restoring to him his rights, and we," sinking her voice, "will say nothing of this deed."

"Yes—yes—we had better not say anything about it," whispered the mother.

"The father is a villain, we know—the brother was a vagabond and thief years ago—only Zach deserves the fortune."

"He would have wished it, if he had lived—my father would," said Mrs. Henwood, gasping yet with the surprise that had overtaken her; "in his grave he would rise to protest against the money being poured into such hands—I'm sure he would. And I could not bear the excitement of a law-suit, perhaps. Yes, yes, we'll burn it!"

"And Zach?"

"He shall be a partner to-morrow—you may write to him to-night in my name—and be married to him when you please. I swear it!—I swear it! Give me that deed."

"And we shall be better friends. To spare you all that you dread, I sin for you!"

"No, I take all the blame. See here!"

She snatched at the deed, and cast it into the fire, turning round with gleaming eyes to Lettice.

"Are we friends now? Can we keep this ever a secret? Can we trust each other, after this?" she asked, with hands extended.

"Yes."

They held each other's hands, and looked at the deed burning out the last hopes of the Fernwell family. If Richard Fernwell, exulting in his income of a hundred and fifty pounds per annum,

could but have known how many thousands he had lost that day! So this strange mother and daughter made friends—but at what a price, and at what a sacrifice!

* * * * * * *

The month was not out when the *Times* informed the world, through the medium of its first column, that Zachary Henwood had taken to wife the only daughter of the late Septimus Henwood, of Tooley Street and Upper Ground Street.

A day or two previously it had been formally announced, by public advertisement, that Zachary Fernwell had resolved upon taking the name of Henwood from that date, and neither Government interfered, nor the public demurred, no one losing a farthing by the change.

It was a quiet wedding—there were some tears shed over it. Perhaps Arabella Evvers, an uninvited guest, shivering in a back pew, watchful of the ceremony, shed tears the most bitter over the hopes that had died with Zach's marriage.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

LONDON: PRINTED BY MACDONALD AND TUGWELL, BLENHEIM HOUSE.